



THE LIFE AND LETTERS
OF
JAMES ABRAM GARFIELD



BRIGADIER-GENERAL JAMES A. GARFIELD

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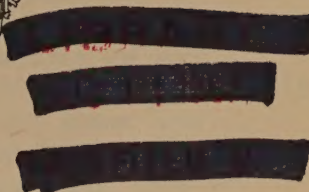
THE LIFE AND LETTERS
OF
JAMES ABRAM GARFIELD

BY
THEODORE CLARKE SMITH

PROFESSOR OF AMERICAN HISTORY AT
WILLIAMS COLLEGE

VOLUME ONE

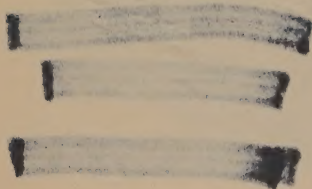
1831-1877



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CONTENTS

PREFACE	vii
I. CHILDHOOD ON THE WESTERN RESERVE, 1831-1850	1
II. THE DISCIPLE SCHOOLBOY, 1850-1854	37
III. AT WILLIAMS COLLEGE UNDER MARK HOPKINS, 1854-1856	69
IV. THE PRINCIPAL OF "THE ECLECTIC," 1856-1859	110
V. FIRST STEPS IN POLITICS, THE OHIO SENATE, 1859-1861	140
VI. THE CIVIL WAR, COLONEL OF THE FORTY-SECOND OHIO, 1861-1862	169
VII. THE TWENTIETH BRIGADE, ELECTION TO CONGRESS, 1862	205
VIII. WAITING FOR A COMMAND, 1862-1863	237
IX. CHIEF OF STAFF, ARMY OF THE CUM- BERLAND, 1863	271
X. CHICKAMAUGA, 1863	315
XI. CONGRESSIONAL BEGINNINGS, WAR LEG- ISLATION, 1863-1865	361
XII. FIRST STEPS IN FINANCE, COMMITTEE OF WAYS AND MEANS, 1865-1867	387
XIII. THE STRUGGLE FOR FINANCIAL LEADER- SHIP, 1867-1871	418
XIV. CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE ON AP- PROPRIATIONS, 1871-1875	478
XV. CRÉDIT MOBILIER, SALARY GRAB AND DE GOLYER PAVEMENT, 1872-1874	528
XVI. BETWEEN LAW AND PUBLIC LIFE, 1875- 1876	582
XVII. VISITING STATESMAN AND ELECTORAL COMMISSIONER, 1876-1877	614

PREFACE

WHEN JAMES ABRAM GARFIELD died in September, 1881, he left, carefully preserved, all his official papers; his letter-books and letters; his manuscript journals, school and college notes and memorabilia; the vast mass of letters received by him and a large collection of pamphlets and newspaper clippings bearing on his career. All this material, through the wise judgment of his wife, was systematically organized, classified, bound up in volumes and indexed—a task which occupied the time of Joseph Stanley-Brown, formerly his secretary, for the space of about eighteen months. This done, the papers were placed in a memorial room at Mentor, built as an addition to the house which had been the Garfield residence since 1877, and there they remained untouched for thirty years. Then, when the generation to which the dead man had belonged had all passed off the stage, and the acrimonious personal controversies that preceded and to a degree caused his assassination had faded into mere political memories, belonging more to the anecdotal side of United States history than to its really important aspects, his wife and children felt that the time had come to use the opportunity which this collection offered for the preparation of a biography which should place in its true perspective the life of the man who left it.

In the following pages the life of James Abram Garfield is set forth so far as possible in his own words through extracts from letters, journals, reminiscences and speeches. In carrying through this policy ample credit should be given to the assistance furnished by Mr. Stanley-Brown in his classification and indexing of the great mass of the Garfield papers. It was so thoroughly and so intelligently executed as to relieve the biographer of practically all the laborious task of investigation and organization which in most cases precedes actual writing. The quotations are relied upon, now and then, for direct evidence as to disputed facts, but for the

most part they give Garfield's own commentary upon himself and his doings, his impressions of events and of contemporaries. It is in the abundance, good humor and candor of these judgments and comments that much of their value consists. The function of the writer, in preparing such a biography, has been strictly limited to selecting, and arranging illustrative material, furnishing an outline of events and supplying explanations where needful. It is Garfield himself who contributes the personal and psychological analysis.

No apology is offered for the fullness of the narrative, for Garfield had an unusually long, full and honored public career and, when death fell suddenly upon him, he was at the beginning of a presidential term which might well have left him, at its conclusion, high on the list of American executives. Equally significant is the fact that his letters and journals serve to illuminate the history of war politics and management and to throw light upon the Congressional history of seventeen eventful years, from 1863 to 1880. It was a grim and turbulent period in American history, as yet imperfectly illuminated by biographical treatment. It is as a contribution to the political and legislative history of these years that a large part of the value of the Garfield papers is to be found.

Still further, the volumes may serve as a study of the public career of a somewhat unusual personality, not at all of the type which, in that epoch of bitter partisanship and machine politics, forged most easily to the front. In a field where hardness, self-seeking, egotism and pugnacity were accounted positive assets to a man who aspired to lead, it is worth while to follow the rise to prominence and power of a man who exhibited none of these traits, but went through life high-minded, affectionate, unselfish and generous, beloved by hundreds, and endeared to the whole nation, owing to the circumstances of his death, as a lovable and courageous individual.

In the preparation of the biography the members of the family of General Garfield have assisted in many ways. More than anyone else his wife, Mrs. James Abram Garfield, who

survived until 1918, furnished information and elucidation upon all sorts of personal matters, especially of the earlier period. It was a privilege, from the practical as well as from the personal side, to have been able to work in close association with her clear and cool judgment and her unusual qualities of character. It is to be understood, however, that for every judgment and every assertion in the following pages the biographer is solely responsible. The Garfield family placed the material absolutely in the hands of the writer and wished to have it clearly understood that his results were to be arrived at purely on the basis of historical criticism and construction, and in no sense as a family biography. In no instance have they sought to exercise the smallest influence upon the biographer's opinions or utterances. Their attitude in this respect has been identical with that of General Garfield himself who, from the beginning to the end of his life, steadily believed that the perpetuation of his memory in fair perspective and the protection of his name from all imputations could best be trusted to those who, in due time, would publish the plain, unvarnished truth.

THEODORE CLARKE SMITH.

*Williamstown, Massachusetts,
September, 1925.*

LIFE OF JAMES ABRAM GARFIELD

CHAPTER I

CHILDHOOD ON THE WESTERN RESERVE

1831-1850

DURING the first century of the United States a succession of political leaders appeared who had spent their childhood amid the hardships of the frontier but who, during their rise to manhood, had seen stumps, log cabins and trails yield to farms, villages and roads; and before they ended their days had found railroads, factories and cities arriving to transform the one-time frontier into a modern industrial community. In the lives of such men, from the greatest national figures down to purely local personages, can often be traced a common courage, hopefulness and breadth of political view that is to be ascribed, in no small part, to the extraordinarily rapid growth in wealth, comfort and culture which accompanied their careers and colored their outlook. Such a man was James Abram Garfield, born in that part of Ohio known as the Western Reserve; a region which exhibited in the fullest degree the characteristics just mentioned.

Northern Ohio was not settled until two generations after the lands along the Ohio River. It was only after the war of 1812 had broken the power of the Indians who had been leagued together by Tecumseh that the full tide of immigration swept into the plains lying south of Lake Erie, so that, with the fear of torch and scalping-knife removed, the population of these counties grew from fifteen thousand in 1810 to over one hundred thousand in 1830. In much of this area, where the land-title had been retained by the State of Connecticut in order to recompense by land-grants the sufferers from British raids along Long Island Sound during the Revolution, the majority of newcomers were New Englanders, who purchased their tracts in the hardwood forests from Connecticut proprietors. Bringing with them the tradi-

tions of their original homes, they immediately reproduced in their new communities the familiar buildings, schools, churches, township names and social customs, modified only by the new economic surroundings. It was in the western part of the newly transplanted New England colony that Garfield was born, in 1831, the son of pioneers.

At that time the Western Reserve was a land of small farms, with occasional villages, but nothing resembling an urban center. Cleveland, the future great city, had as yet but 1,076 inhabitants. No railroad existed and the only means of freight transportation was by sail, or less commonly steam, along the lake shore, or by canal boat on the newly finished Ohio canal system. By the time that Garfield entered public life, in 1860, the population had grown to over 350,000, three important lines of railroad traversed the counties and Cleveland, where lake and railway traffic met, had as many as 43,417 inhabitants. Twenty years later, when Garfield ended his long service as representative of the Western Reserve in Congress, the population of the region had become more than half a million, Cleveland had as many as 160,146; Youngstown and Akron, thriving manufacturing towns of 15,435 and 16,512 souls respectively, were beginning their career of industrial growth, and in dozens of smaller places factories and iron mines were established, clearly foreshadowing the later development of the region. It is on the background of this steady prosperous growth that Garfield's career is to be seen and his political outlook comprehended.

The Garfield family was of typical New England stock. The first of the name, Edward Garfield, was among the earliest of the Massachusetts settlers, being found in Watertown in 1630. For a century and a half his descendents remained near Boston, but after the Revolution Solomon Garfield, sixth in descent, felt the westward impulse of the time and moved to the frontier town of Worcester,—a New England name,—in Otsego County, New York. Nearly forty years later his grandson, Abram Garfield, born December 28, 1799, followed the example of thousands of other young men and went westward with the wave of migration that

overflowed Ohio and the Ohio valley states after the treaty of Ghent. It was in 1819 that he turned up in Muskingum County, prepared to win his fortunes by his strong arms, but he lingered only long enough to marry Eliza Ballou, a girl of eighteen, he himself being still under twenty-one. Traveling northward across the state to the thinly settled lands of the Western Reserve, he and his girl wife promptly set up housekeeping, in a manner which was described by the latter half a century later in a series of reminiscent letters to her son.

"The first house we lived in was a log house," wrote Mrs. Garfield, in her plain, homely style. (March 31, 1870.) "We lived in it about four months. Your father took up a piece of land on the Cuyahoga river, 15 acres on the bottom and the rest on the hill. The amount of land was 40 acres. Your father built a snug log house and in August we moved in." The site of this experiment was in the township of Independence,—now in the outskirts of Cleveland, but then little better than a wilderness,—and it proved disastrous. "In Sept.," continued Mrs. Garfield, "I was taken with the Ague and shook two weeks. Then the Doc. turned it into the bilious fever. I had a run of the fever. Your Father was then taken with the Ague. We was both sick all the fall." (December 23, 1868.) The log house had to be abandoned and for several years the youthful pair lived with relatives while the effects of the malaria were wearing off. "We was sick every fall regular," observed Mrs. Garfield. Meanwhile three children were born, Mehitabel in 1821, Thomas in 1822, Mary in 1824, each of whom survived the hardships of infancy and malaria.

Ambitious to provide for his growing family, the young man tried a new venture in 1826. His wife's narrative said: "Then the canal was all the vogue. Your father in company with two other men took a large job on the canal. They made out first rate. Then your father went to Tuscarawas county in the southern part of the state and took three sections of canal to build. We moved on to the job in April 1827." (December 27, 1868.) The Ohio canals, then under construction, were planned to unite Cleveland on Lake Erie

with the Ohio River, touching the latter in two places, and the amazing success of the Erie canal filled all imaginations with high hopes of the benefits to be attained. Abram Garfield finished his contract, but it proved a losing venture, owing to a sudden rise of prices which wiped out not only his expected profits but nearly all that he had gained the first time. In 1828 he found himself no better off than when he first married eight years before.

But such setbacks counted for little on the frontier. The young bankrupt turned again hopefully to farming, and this time, warned by his earlier experience, he avoided the river bottoms. "Before the completion of the canal contract," ran Mrs. Garfield's letter, "your father had bought our land in Orange and had hired twenty acres slashed." After finishing the canal job, "he went to Orange to build a house (a log one of course). I cannot say how much he was worth when we moved to Orange; not very much for we sunk a good deal on the canal. We paid $2\frac{1}{2}$ Dollars an acre for our land. We bought it of William Tuckerman of Conn. Calvin and John Mapes, John Smith and Uncle Amos helped raise the house. It was the last days of 1829. We then moved in our own House, the first Land and House we ever owned." (February 7, 1869.)

The township of Orange lay in Cuyahoga County to the eastward of the Cuyahoga River, on a gently rolling plain where it dropped suddenly to the narrow, ravinelike valley excavated by the Chagrin River, in its short course to Lake Erie from the watershed between the Great Lakes and the Ohio tributaries. In it, at this time, the census of 1830 showed three hundred and thirty-four inhabitants, only one hundred and twenty-seven of whom were over twenty years of age. Most of the families were settled near the river, and where Abram Garfield cleared his land and built his log hut on the upland there were scarcely any neighbors and the woods stretched almost unbroken for miles. The site of this log house is now a grain field, with only some ancient bushes and apple trees to suggest its probable location; the woods have dwindled to small groves in the back lots, but the two brooks which flowed near the house in 1830 still run through

the fields and, joining, fall down a winding ravine into the valley of the Chagrin.

It was in this log house that on November 19, 1831, a child was born to whom was given the name of James Abram Garfield. The first name was in memory of an older child who had been born in 1827, during the residence in Tuscarawas County, but had died in 1829. Following a well-established New England custom, the name of the dead child was given to his younger brother.

The mother, in her quaint style, has left some half-humorous comments on her children and on their early days: "Hitty was a very good little girl, she was a mild, peacible child, active but not boisterous." Of Thomas, "he was a plain-looking Babe . . . he was a very thoughtful child. Mary . . . was the whitest child I ever saw . . . she was a good-natured Babe very full of mischief but not ugly. . . . James A. was the largest Babe I ever had, he looked like a red Irishman, a very large Head and Shoulders & Body equal to the Head and Shoulders. He was a very good-natured Child he walked when he was nine Months old, when ten months old he would climb the fence, go up the ladder a dozen times a day he never was still a minute at a time in his whole life. . . . Always uneasy, very quick to learn, he was rather lazy, did not like to work the best that ever was." (March 31, 1870.)

The picture of the young pioneer father, as it appeared in his wife's memory a generation later, is worth giving in the quaint language of the letter in which the description appears. "Your father," she wrote (March 31, 1870), "was five feet and eleven inches high, large head, broad shoulders and chest, high forehead, brown hair, blue eyes, light complexion, a beautiful set of teeth as any man ever had. They were just as even as they could be and very white. Cheeks very red, lips tolerably full, but to me very handsome. His hands and feet small for a man of his size. His boots I think were eights, his bearing noble and brave, his bump of benevolence was fully developed, fond of his friends, everybody liked him, his judgment very good, more than common. I don't know about his speaking in public; I think however he

could not. He was quite fluent in politics, he was a zealous Christian, contended earnestly for the faith once delivered to the Saints, he had a tolerably quick temper but he could govern it well, he was pleasant in his family, most always cheerful and social, a kind word for everyone. I think he was too severe with the children; I think it was owing to the way he was managed when a child. He was a pretty good writer, but not a good speller; quite good in figures. His dress when at work was such as farmers generally wear. When he went from home he always dressed up and looked as neat as a pin. I tell you he was a handsome man, he had a noble heart, his feelings tender, his love for his children could not be surpassed, his example before his children becoming. In those days it was of some account to be a good wrestler." Tradition, it should here be added, spoke of Abram Garfield as "a man of prodigious strength. He was famous as a wrestler, and never met his match though men would come for miles from all around to wrestle with 'Abe Garfield.'"¹

In these outlines, if the wife's memory is to be trusted, it is clear that many of the outward characteristics of her son, James Abram Garfield, are to be seen. Everything that she said about her husband's social and family habits strongly suggested the qualities of the son to whom she was writing her reminiscences.

But the woman who wrote these loving memories, deserves commemoration no less than the husband. Eliza Ballou, whom Abram Garfield had married February 3, 1820, was also a migrant to Ohio. Her father, James Ballou, came of a family originally French Huguenots, who had settled in Rhode Island at the end of the seventeenth century. About 1774 James Ballou, who had been living in Cumberland, Rhode Island, moved with his large family of children to Richmond, New Hampshire, a town in Cheshire County not far from the Massachusetts line. There his son, James, Jr., who had been born in 1761, married Mehitabel Ingalls and had seven children, five of whom, together with his widow, survived him when he died in 1808. After a short time Mrs. Ballou moved to Worcester, Otsego County, to be near rela-

¹ J. M. Bundy, *Life of Gen. J. A. Garfield*, p. 5.

tives. Mrs. Garfield, in her reminiscences, said of her mother: "My father and mother lived very happily, no jars or discord marred their wedded life. My Mother was a Weaver, she was not ashamed to labor. In those days it was no disgrace to work." At this time the family of Solomon Garfield was also in Worcester, and the two families naturally became acquainted. "I want you to know," wrote Mrs. Abram Garfield in her biographical letter of 1870, "that I was acquainted with your Father and played with him in Childhood more or less for four years."

That the Ballou family was more intellectual in its habits than the Garfields there can be no doubt. Hosea Ballou, a relative, the founder of Universalism, lived in the same town in New Hampshire, and Silas Ballou, a great-uncle of James Garfield, was an author of many Universalist hymns. "The Ballous, according to all traditions," says Bundy, reflecting probably General Garfield's own views, "have been small in stature, and have been called a 'French pony breed' which means compactness and toughness of fibre, moral, intellectual and physical; great nervous energy, combined with endurance, and a fine texture of organization throughout. Eloquency and the gift of poetry came naturally to the family. . . . All stories about the Garfields confirm the accepted theory that they have been distinguished for their physical strength and for their generosity, warm-heartedness and dashing courage, but without much tendency to intellectual feats. General Garfield believes that he is the second Garfield who ever graduated from a college. The dynamic forces that were to take him out of the range of all previous Garfields lay coiled up in the fine, sensitive, religious nature of his mother."¹

As to Eliza Ballou herself, she had little education, but was a woman of marked personality and, as time was to show, of courage and devotion. All who knew her felt that her famous son undoubtedly derived his intellectual aptitudes from her rather than from his father. "Mentally, the little wife was probably his superior," wrote her daughter-in-law, "at least in quickness of perception and shrewdness of wit,

¹ Bundy, *Life of Gen. J. A. Garfield*, p. 5.

while she possessed the same high courage and unconquerable energy."¹

Various relatives who lived in the vicinity and who played a considerable part in the history of Abram Garfield's family should be noted at this point. The nearest were the Boynton family, whose father, "Uncle Amos," a half brother of Abram Garfield, had married "Aunt Alpha" Ballou, the younger sister of Mrs. Garfield. These were close neighbors in the town of Orange, the five children, three boys and two girls, being younger than the oldest Garfields, but near enough to James to be companions and playmates. "In this double relationship the children grew up like brothers and sisters. The oldest of the Boynton sisters was only a year older than James, and they inherited many tastes in common. They loved the same stories and many a long evening they sat with their heads together in the firelight poring over the same book. Mr. Boynton was a man of more than ordinary note. Industrious almost to a fault, but of inflexible integrity and great common sense, he became after his brother's death not only to a certain extent guardian of the Garfield children, but was throughout the neighborhood a kind and wise adviser and the arbitrator of neighborhood differences. To this uncle General Garfield gave much credit and he never forgot his influence, nor the lessons he taught, nor the encouragement he was ever ready to give."²

On the Garfield side the nearest was "Uncle Thomas" Garfield, the younger brother of Abram Garfield, who lived at Newburgh, the next town, and had a large family. Farther away, but still keeping up frequent connections with the Abram Garfield household, was the household of Amos Letcher, who had married a sister of Abram Garfield and lived in Bryan, Ohio. Two of his sons, Amos and William, were near to James Garfield in age. In the southern part of Ohio there were several families of Ballous, brothers of Mrs. Garfield, with whom she kept up connections and to whom she made occasional visits in later years.

Most of these families were plain farming people, not

¹ Mrs. J. A. Garfield, MS. biographical sketch, 1887.

² MS. biographical sketch, 1887.

remarkable in any way among their neighbors, "good New England stock" and good citizens, but not gifted with any spark of divine fire. Only among the Ballous do we find traces of any literary ambitions, but the particular family in which these appeared—that of Henry Ballou—lived in Muskingum County, too far from Orange to have any particular influence upon the life or the outlook of their cousins.

By the third year that the family had lived in their own house, life was beginning to assume a regular aspect. Abram Garfield was successfully running his farm. "We lived as well as our neighbors," his wife wrote. A description of the family food suggests abundance. "For breakfast we usually had meat and potatoes, Bread & Butter & Tea sometimes Coffee & frequently pancakes, for dinner boiled Victuals or Baked Beans & baked pudding for supper we had Tea, Bread & Butter or Biscuit sometimes apple sauce peach & Cold boiled Victuals which your Father was fond of." On such a diet it was no wonder if, as Mrs. Garfield wrote (February 7, 1869), "Your father would do as much work in one day as any man would in two."

In 1833 the two people became active members of the Disciples church. "If it had not been for the loss of our boy," ran the narrative, "we should have enjoyed complete happiness. We resolved to live a different life if we could find the right way; after a while a Disciple Preacher by the name of Murdoch preached several times, it was the first Gospel sermon we ever heard, We were well pleased with the explanation of truth and the claims of the Gospel. Very soon Mr. Bently moved there & preached in the neighborhood & at his House, we attended Meetings almost every Sunday, we knew our duty, but like a great many postponed it, . . . but in 1833, Jan the 22nd your Father was immersed & on the 3rd of Feb. I obeyed the Saviour. It then seemed we were perfectly happy." (March 31, 1870.)

Suddenly on this young family descended tragedy. One day in May, 1833, Abram Garfield was taken with a sickness more serious even than the "ague" which had "kept him shaking nearly every fall." The tradition found in all narratives is that he "caught a violent cold" after fighting a forest

fire that threatened his clearing, and that an itinerant self-styled "doctor" endeavored to relieve the inflammation by applying a blister to his throat. In two days he practically strangled to death, from what was probably pneumonia. He died in picturesque fashion. "Immediately before the end, he got up and walked across the room, looked out at his oxen, and called them by name, went back and said, 'Eliza, I have brought you four young saplings into these woods. Take care of them.' And he died, sitting up against the head of the bed."¹

The sudden death of Abram Garfield left the small family face to face with the problem of existence in its most acute form. Mrs. Garfield, a woman of thirty-one, slight in frame and strength, and her four children had nothing in the world but the house they lived in, the land around it and their own hands. The oldest boy, Thomas, was less than eleven years old. Under the circumstances the natural thing would have been for the young mother to fall back for support on her numerous relatives or on the scarcely less numerous relatives of her husband. But with a fairly desperate courage she declined to consider that alternative and undertook to keep herself and her children alive, to run the farm, so far as possible, and maintain her independence. So began a heroic struggle.

The most authentic account of the years that followed appeared in a campaign biography of 1880, written by J. M. Bundy, who undoubtedly derived his information directly from Mrs. Garfield herself.

"She was entitled to \$120 as 'a year's support' which she could hold as against any creditor. But even in her desperate situation she scorned to take this entirely just advantage. She paid off all the debts, sold fifty acres of land which was mortgaged for purchase money, and saved thirty acres on which to support herself and her children. Only those who have lived in new settlements can comprehend how the Widow Garfield got along. A few incidents out of a multitude must illustrate. Abram Garfield had 'got in' a good

¹ Bundy, *Life of Gen. J. A. Garfield*, p. 9, probably from E.B.G., 1880.

crop of wheat, all secured by fences except about a hundred rails. There were, in readiness for splitting into rails, great chestnut 'cuts' and a few days after the funeral Widow Garfield took her son Thomas out to the pile of 'cuts' and with his help split the needed rails herself—the plucky little woman. She was a first-rate seamstress, and would go to the shoemaker's and make clothes for his children, while he in return would make shoes for her children. By the time that Thomas got to be a lad of ten or twelve he was able to ride a horse to plough corn and earned twenty or twenty-five cents a day, paid in wheat or other 'produce.' He was a true 'father's boy' and seemed inspired with an idea of self-sacrificing labor, that gave him almost the spirit of a mature man and the sense of responsibility for the support of the family. The sisters also were helpful in all ways. The widow had a few sheep. She and her daughters carded the wool, wove the cloth, and made all the garments that could be made of wool. So in all sorts of ways the busy little household managed not only to exist but to live well, as they thought."¹

During all this time Mrs. Garfield indignantly denied that they were ever "poor." To her mind there was a connotation of slackness, of indigency, about the word. A "poor family" was one that did not pay its debts, that received charity, that was shiftless, a social failure. She and her children, on the contrary, received no aid, worked and won their living and could look any man in the face. "We are not to think of the family as exceptionally poor," wrote another biographer,² "for in many respects Mrs. Garfield, even in her widowhood, was quite as well off as many of her neighbors. The country was new; the settlers were poor; the forest was dense; and there must be many sturdy blows of the axe before even a small clearing could be made. All were poor together—not from any lack of thrift or enterprise, but from stress of circumstances which time alone could remove."

Under these circumstances young James Garfield grew up knowing nothing of physical ease or luxury, but, owing to his very tender age at the time his father died, he did not

¹ Bundy, *Life of Gen. J. A. Garfield*, p. 10.

² C. C. Coffin, *Life of James A. Garfield*, p. 39.

do much work until the first years of struggling were long past, and his brother Thomas had developed to a man's responsibility in every sense. While the rest of the family worked, he, a small child, amused himself. All his later recollections were of playing in and near the log house. It was not until he was ten or eleven years old that he did more than aid in "chores" about the house, drive cattle, pick fruit and the like.

In a birthday letter written from Williams College, November 19, 1855, Garfield recalled to his mother some of his childhood memories, giving a few pictures of the early days. "As I lay awake last night when the midnight wind was sighing mournfully among the trees around the College buildings I reviewed my life by years as they have hurried along. I saw myself the little babe in your arms—the child upon your knee—the prattling boy of 4—the stubborn wilful boy of eight—the little school-boy of ten—playing around the log house and log school house, the stripling of twelve walking to Bedford with Mother, begging her to stop and let him sit by her on the logs to rest. I see myself again playing on the rocks in the woods—by the brook—and in short all around the little farm—our dear Old Home."

In a letter of March 2, 1854, when Garfield revisited the site of his birthplace after the log house had fallen down, he wrote: "The old stone backwall to the chimney is still standing—a monument of the dead past, and as I stood there and looked upon those stones it brought vividly to my mind the days of my childhood, when that wall served as a screen against which the blaze of the log fire was leaping and crackling in which I traced a thousand fantastic figures of giants on fiery steeds and hosts embattled for war, in all the imaginations of a childish fancy. I again seemed tumbling on the floor with brother and sisters. . . . The intervening years seemed to have dropped and I was ten again." In a letter to his cousin, Phebe Boynton, after reeling off a long list of nicknames of old Orange worthies, as seen in imagination, he concluded: "You don't know how refreshing it was to see all those again and at the same time to fancy myself wearing blue cotton pants rolled up above my knees and

wading in the 'Big Brook' just above 'Thorp's old saw-mill.' I can feel the soft mud rolling up between my toes now and the 'shiners' nibbling at my shins." (April 24, 1855.)

In all their hard work, the family was not embittered nor hardened. "There was little complaining," wrote Mrs. James Abram Garfield in 1887, "and the bright-spirited mother and merry-hearted children were a host against the demons of want. The day might be full of toil but the voice of song enlivened all, and the evening brought rest or reading, or a visit with the cousins who lived just across the fields."

The part played by the mother in this household it would be hard to overemphasize, especially since with her the peace and happiness gained by her joining the Disciples in 1833 were a lasting influence. "The Widow Garfield was a great Bible reader and taught her children to read it. She walked regularly to her 'Disciples' meeting-house, three miles away, every Sunday for years, and took the children with her. Later a church was organized in the little school-house on her land. In all ways she impressed religious truth on her children, and kept them not only from bad habits but from bad thoughts. Anything that approached impurity of life and speech in any degree, was hateful to her beyond expression. In that household there was a sort of flaming sword swinging constantly against all forms of indecency and immorality."¹ The frontier is a place of rough, plain life; of great coarseness of speech. The importance of such a fighter for decency in a family of young people exposed to all the influences of the region cannot be exaggerated.

But "Mother Garfield" was not merely a repressing influence. "The Widow Garfield," reports Bundy, "was the farthest possible from what might be called the sanctimoniousness of religion. She did not bring any of its forbidding aspects into the family. She was not merely a cheerful but a jolly woman, a woman of great 'heartiness,' an exquisite singer, and had a memory almost marvellous. It is General Garfield's belief that she could have sung for forty-eight hours consecutively from her large repertory if her strength could have held out that long. She knew an infinite variety

¹ Bundy, *Life of Gen. J. A. Garfield*, p. 13.

of songs—hymns, ballads, and the war-songs of 1812, such as those describing the fight of the *Guerrière*, and the *Wasp* and *Hornet*, and all those naval engagements. Whenever the children were depressed or dull she would sing and fill their hearts with vigor and cheer. She was full of life and of a cheerful and robust morality that knew no taint.”¹

It was this family training and education, mainly unconscious, which of course made the deepest, most lasting impressions on the boy. “His memory served him well, and the lessons learned during these early years were never forgotten. Poems, snatches of old songs, wise sayings, anecdotes, and even the duller facts lingered with him, ready to spring at his call, or furnish happy illustrations, or give point to a well-turned period, during all the years that followed. The neighborhood, too, was composed of more than ordinarily incongruous elements. Droll characters had dropped out from the ever westward drifting tide of civilization, and attaching themselves, some to the soil to merely vegetate, others in a kind of parasitic growth, to take much from and give little to the general prosperity of the community, and all their eccentricities were noticed by the wide-awake, fun-loving children of the Garfield and Boynton families and furnished to them a never-failing fund for humor, and in later years a gathering, however small, from their ranks was sure to revive some mirth-inspiring memory.”²

But life was not all play for the small boy. The Garfield family had all the New England respect for education and James was taken by his sister “Hittie” through the woods down into the river valley to a district school a mile and a half from home, when he was only three years old. Tradition says that “after a few months he was able to read in the Bible” and further that “at the end of the first term he received a New Testament as a prize for being the best reader in his class of little boys.”

The next year a more convenient place was provided. “A schoolhouse,” writes Mrs. J. A. Garfield, “was built on the little farm of the Garfields, and for as many months of each

¹ Bundy, *Life of Gen. J. A. Garfield*, p. 13.

² Mrs. J. A. Garfield, biographical sketch, 1887.

year as the work would allow, a school was kept up for their own and the neighbors' children. The teachers were not always the best but the lessons learned in the rude school-house were to be long remembered, and had in them the seeds of that force and vital energy and fixed determination which bore such rich harvest."¹

The schoolhouse on the corner of the Widow Garfield's lot "was plain and rough enough. The scholars sat on split logs, hewed a little on the top, four pegs put on the round side and supporting the benches. . . . Textbooks were few and of all sorts but faithfully learned, which was the main thing. James, for instance, whose prodigious memory developed early, learned Webster's spelling-book almost by heart by the time he was eight years old. In fact, up to that time the main things he had learned were reading, spelling and writing."² Within this narrow range, however, he seems to have impressed his teachers as a boy likely to excel. His own family, at all events, soon came to feel that whatever their destiny might be, his lay in the direction of education, and, with a devotion thoroughly characteristic of their race and their age, they consciously subordinated their welfare to his. "Even when James, with his rapid growth, at the age of ten, had become able to work, his fatherly brother Thomas insisted on the former going to school. The mother, with her intense New England spirit, was, of course, glad to see James 'getting along with his books' as rapidly as possible. In fact, the feeling of the whole family seemed to be, 'Whatever else happens, James must go to school,' and as for James, it is the common local tradition that even if he knew that study would never prove useful to him, he would have pursued it for the love of it."³

In a letter to his cousin, Phebe Boynton (January 2, 1853), Garfield later wrote: "I suppose you are enjoying yourself very much in attending school this winter and in that old familiar district and house where we spent the most

¹ MS. biographical sketch, 1887.

² Bundy, *Life of Gen. J. A. Garfield*, p. 11.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

pleasant days of childhood and youth. . . . The recollections of those school-boy days are woven into and form a part of my very being. . . . I sometimes almost wish I were a boy (small boy) again; to play in the field, that pasture, and by the brook and attend that school. . . . I then looked upon a teacher as some superior being who stood upon a height above me, almost inaccessible. That feeling that I had is still with me, toward those that were my teachers and will be, should I live to half a century."

All those who collected legends of James Garfield's youth found that he was remembered as a boy of great restlessness and activity and an immense desire for fun and excitement. But first the wife's tale: "In many ways he was a blundering, careless boy. To learn the use of an axe, he was obliged almost a score of times to be shut up in the house or hobble on crutches, disabled by fearful gashes made through his carelessness. Once he came near killing his cousin Silas Boynton by heedless use of an axe, and within a hairs breadth of ending his own life by plunging headlong down through a mill."¹

At no time in his life did he show physical fear. He seems to have been one of those temperaments born to take risks easily and never to let his imagination daunt him. This brought him, in spite of his general good nature, into many a youthful fight, such as boys at all times and in all ages drop into out of sheer excess of physical energy. The tradition was established of great pugnacity on his part. "At fifteen," says Bundy, "he was a large boy, strong and athletic; inspired too, by the traditions of his father's wrestling. He was too thoroughly good-natured to be quarrelsome, but he had imbibed the notion, not that it was a disgrace to be an orphan, but that other boys who had fathers and 'big brothers' had, somehow, an advantage over him, and were inclined to 'run over' him, and every sign of this he resented, and fought instantly and 'to hurt' no matter against what odds of strength or numbers, until he got the name of being a 'fighting boy' which was a great grief to his mother."²

¹ MS. biographical sketch, 1887.

² Bundy, *Life of Gen. J. A. Garfield*, p. 15.

Though James was perfectly ready to fight, his pugnacity had one marked limitation. Years later he said: "It must be that there is an innate deference to authority in me. I remember how awful in my boyhood was the authority of a teacher over me. I would not have hesitated to fight with a person older than myself. But if that same person became my teacher in the district school I should have been shocked at the thought of a conflict between us."¹

An interesting comment on Garfield's youth was made by his friend, J. D. Cox. "I can think of few more healthy places for the growth of mind and body than a farming community in Northern Ohio fifty years ago. . . . The country was just passing from the rude condition of first settlements in the wilderness to that of a thriving agricultural region, dotted with prosperous villages. None was rich, but nearly all were thrifty and intelligent. Although one farmer might have more acres or a larger barn than another, the boys and girls of all alike worked upon the farm or in the house, attended the same school and the same merry-makings and none could be supported in idleness. Under such circumstances poverty had none of the degradation which too often accompanies it in old and populous communities. Here was no squalor, no vice, no loss of caste. It involved no closing of any career to a boy who had health and courage, brain and will. Taking it all in all, I doubt if the world offers a happier lot or contains a nearer approach to a model community."²

By the time that young James was fifteen years old the family had undergone important changes. His oldest sister had married Stephen Trowbridge in 1837, at the age of sixteen, and gone to live in the neighboring town of Solon. In 1844 the younger sister, Mary, married Marenus Larabee and went likewise to Solon, leaving Mrs. Garfield on the little farm with the two sons. Thomas, the steady and devoted older brother, was now inclined to look for a chance to set up for himself, and one season went to work for wages in Michigan, leaving James and his mother alone. The fif-

¹ Journal, March 28, 1877.

² J. D. Cox, "Early Life of James A. Garfield" in *Society of Army of Cumberland*, 1882, pp. 88-90.

teen-year-old boy was big enough to do full-time work, but it seems to be the family tradition that farming as an occupation did not satisfy him. He showed from an early date a desire to help himself and his mother rather by earning money away from home than by tending the garden patch or the cornfield. So he sought and performed a multitude of small jobs of every conceivable kind, for neighbors and relatives, earning ridiculously small pay for heavy labor and long hours.

He had an attitude of full frontier independence toward those who employed him and would stand no assumptions of superiority. In 1847, for instance, he started in helping at "black-salting." He got nine dollars a month and board for working about the kettles in which wood ashes were kept hot, while water leached through them to make crude potash. But he broke off abruptly on hearing himself called a "servant" by the supercilious daughter of his employer—at least, so runs the tradition.¹

It is in January of 1848 that the student of Garfield's life first strikes solid support for his narrative, in the shape of a journal which the boy began to keep. The title-page was inscribed with due solemnity: "Jas. A Garfield's daily Register. January first 1848. Preface. It being New Year's day I commence a journal of the general events of my life. The object of this little work is to exercise the hand a little every day in writing and also to assist in remembering events that are of some importance." The little volume is a blank book ruled for accounts, and the handwriting is a careful "Spencerian" with shaded letters, but practically no punctuation.

It is a real boy's journal, excessively terse and perfectly objective. Ordinarily about one sentence a day suffices to cover the "events of some importance." The very first entry, for instance, runs: "Jan. 1 Sat. hunting with O. H. Judd in A.M. went to Davis school in the P.M. quite rainy"; and the next is still briefer: "2. Sun. at home today been studying Mother sick." The penmanship indicates that the hand that used the pen was accustomed to hard labor. The punctuation and capitalization are very faulty, but it is a note-

¹ E. E. Brown, *Life and Public Services of J. A. Garfield*, p. 27.

worthy fact that there is seldom a case of bad spelling. This bears out the tradition about learning the spelling-book by heart. There are not infrequent examples, however, of ungrammatical expressions of a rustic nature: "Feb. 8 Tues. at home drawed hay and wood." No one need look to such a journal for revelations of the boy's inner life, and such light as has been thrown upon his adolescent dreams and ambitions has come from later recollections.

In this journal one can trace clearly the labors of this big, strong youth. On March 7 he notes briefly: "took 100 cords of wood to chop underbrushed a little," and the diary records day after day of unremitting chopping. When that contract was finished, he went back to doing odd jobs, and truly he let little grass grow under his feet. Here, for example, is a brief list of the things he did during the spring and summer of 1848. He chopped wood for a month for Edward Barns, at 50 cents a day; he helped at house-raising, he "planted for H Brainerd," he "washed sheep for Fisher," he loaded a boat with wood for Cleveland, and escorted it there several times; he ploughed and hoed corn for brother Thomas, he did odd jobs for his brother-in-law "Marenius," he "tended mason," he worked in the hayfield, taking "4 acres of grass to cut for 50 cents per acre of W. Taylor"; he hired out at man's wages—one dollar a day—to mow for Treat, then for his brother-in-law Trowbridge; he also "cradled weat," he mowed for Patridge and for Roundt.

It was in this year, when he was sixteen, that young Garfield felt an overpowering restlessness. He wanted to leave the narrow circuit of life at Orange, to see the outside world, to be his own master. It was the first stirring within him of manly ambition and the form it took was the outcome of the only strong inspiration the boy had yet received. Years later, in 1877, Garfield said: "I formed the determination to become a sailor. Nautical novels did it. I had read a large number of them, all I could get in the neighborhood. My mother tried to turn my attention in other directions, but the books were considered bad and from that very fact were fascinating. I remember especially the 'Pirates Own Book' which became a sort of bible or general authority with me

at that period. In the spring of 1848 I chopped 100 cords of wood upon a farm in Newburg, Cuyahoga county, within sight of the Lake and the passage of a ship made me almost insane with delight. The blue expanse seemed to me a region of enchantment and the great vessels the only means of going into that region."¹

This early reading was described in more detail in the biographies of 1880. "He and his cousin Harriet Boynton," said Bundy,² "read 'Robinson Crusoe' over and over again. He read and mastered 'Josephus' when he was about twelve, and was wild over a story of the adventures of a man traveling down the Mississippi. When he was about fourteen he read Goodrich's History of the United States, and so thoroughly were all its facts impressed on his plastic mind, that he can now (1880) quote freely its statistics of the American and British losses in most of the battles recorded. Having so few books, the study of them was intensified. Even a poetical 'History of the United States' by a fellow named Eggleston was committed to memory . . . and the story of 'Alonzo and Melissa' captivated his imagination." Another writer adds Weem's *Life of Marion* and Grimshaw's *Napoleon*.³

The breaking point came in the summer of 1848, when a life of odd jobs became unendurable. The "interview" of 1877 furnishes a detailed story. "I finally determined," he said, "that nothing, not even the persuasions of my mother, should any longer keep me from following out the bent of my inclinations. I accordingly gathered up what money I had and started for Cleveland with the firm intention of beginning at the bottom of the business of sailing and carefully mastering it. There was but a single vessel in the port at the time that I thought I should like to go on and I accordingly made my way directly to this. The alacrity with which I ascended the gang plank, the lightness of heart with which I enquired of the first hand I saw for an interview with the captain must have been amusing. Up to this time I had

¹ MS. biographical notes, 1877.

² *Life of General J. A. Garfield*, p. 13.

³ W. R. Balch, *From the Tow-path to the White-House*, p. 48.

had a poetic conception of a vessel master, which had been derived from my nautical novels. But the moment I beheld the brutal man who, half drunk, came staggering upon the deck, my whole former conception of that personage was radically changed. He had evidently been in a towering passion about something and upon my asking him if he wanted a hand he turned all his vengeance towards me. Such swearing and cursing as he indulged in, it had never been my lot to hear before. He did not deign to answer my question. At the close of a time which must have been very short but which seemed to me very long, I turned upon my heel and left the vessel amid the loud jeers and laughter of the men."

Although rebuffed in his first attempt, Garfield was none the less determined to get to sea somehow. "I came," he said, "from my visit to the captain with the opinion fixed in my mind that I was yet too green to become a real sailor. I thought there should be some apprenticeship served before coming upon a real vessel. In a few hours I had decided what that apprenticeship should be. I would hire out, if possible, upon a canal boat. Going directly to the canal I asked if they wanted a hand. No place was vacant except that of driver. As canaling was at the bottom of sailing, so driving was at the bottom of canaling. I took the job."

As the one great adventure of his childhood this experience on the canal as told in the diary deserves quotation. "Aug. 16 Wed. went to Cleveland hired on Canal boat Evening Star to my cousin A Letcher started up the canal. 17 Thur we pursued our journey up the canal through Akron &c &c our loading consisted of fifty two tons of Copper ore taken on at Cleveland and destined for Pittsburg. From Akron we turned East on the Cross cut which passes through Cuyahoga Falls, Franklin, Ravenna, Warren, Youngstown and a short distance [from] the latter place it forms a junction with the Erie extension and from there we went to Beaver on the Ohio River. hired a steamboat to tow us up the river to Pittsburgh where we arrived on the 26th. Sun 27 took a stroll [about] the place listened to two sermons in the street by men hired by the authorities of the place.

"Mon 28 Steamboat towed us up the Monongahela two miles where we unloaded the boat and returned to Pittsburgh in the evening

"Tues. 29 Steamboat towed us down to Beaver

"Wed. 30 arrived at Youngstown took 60 tons Coal and started for Cleveland where we arrived September second. Staid over Sunday unloaded Monday and started up the Canal again. My business is bowing which is to make the locks ready, get the boat through trim the lamps &c I get 14 dollars per month."

At this point the daily journal stopped but the boy made a later entry which continued the narrative. "I followed this business," he wrote, "about two months in which time we transported 240 tons of stone coal and 40 tons of Iron to Cleveland and 52 tons of copper ore, 150 barrels of Salt 10 thousand laths and 1000 feet of lumber from Cleveland to different places along the canal."

To these humdrum facts, the reminiscences of thirty years later added considerable color. "That first trip," said Garfield, "was one of many adventures. I could not swim a particle and I knew almost nothing about the water except what I had read. The consequence was I fell into the canal just fourteen times and had fourteen almost miraculous escapes from drowning. But notwithstanding all, I made pretty fair progress in the business and at the close of my first round trip I was promoted to bowsman."

The interview of 1877 describes with some minuteness a fight he actually had and one he barely escaped. In the first case, a deck hand, "Dave," was infuriated when a "setting-pole" was accidentally knocked out of Garfield's hands and hit him "amidships." Garfield immediately expressed regret, but Dave flew into a passion. "Rising he ran toward me, muttering horrible oaths. I was a boy of 16 to be sure and he a man of 35. But as I remember it now, not a feeling of fear came into my mind. I determined not to be whipped but, if possible, to whip. . . . Remaining perfectly still until he was almost upon me, I suddenly jumped aside and as he passed I dealt him a terrible blow just back of and under his left ear. With great force he fell with his head between two

beams in the bottom of the boat." The captain, who was Garfield's cousin, called out, with ample profanity, to "pound the damn-fool to death," but the boy, who had sprung on the back of the prostrate deck hand, declined to abuse his victory. "I didn't strike," he said, "I couldn't, some way. It seemed to me that it would be wrong . . . when I saw Dave wholly in my power." So he let Dave up, the latter apologized for losing his temper and the affair was ended. "This fight," added Garfield, "gave me much prestige with the rough men along the canal. I had whipped a man and was accorded [the rank of] a hero."

Captain Amos Letcher was evidently a rough specimen, as illustrated again by an interview with him in 1880, printed in one of the campaign lives of Garfield.¹ In it he described how his cousin Jim protested on the first trip against trying to "steal a lock" from a boat which had the right of way, and was accused by one of the hands of being a coward for not risking a fight. "Said I, 'Boys, don't be hard on Jim. Jim may be a coward for aught I know, but if he is, he is the first one of the name that I ever knew that was. His father was no coward. He helped dig this canal, and weighed over two hundred pounds and could take a barrel of whiskey by the chime and drink out of the bung-hole and no man dared call him coward. You'll alter your mind about Jim before long.' The next trip Jim was bowsman. Before we got to Beaver the boys all liked him first-rate." Apparently their liking arose from the successful handling of Dave, just described.

At a later time this episode in his youth, confined as it was to about six weeks, assumed large proportions in the public eye, until writers and speakers with grotesque exaggeration, referred to him as having been "brought up on the tow-path."² Garfield himself, two years later, in a passage to be quoted in its place, refers to himself as being "ripe for ruin" on the canal and "ready to drink in every species of vice." There was nothing, unless it be a lumber camp, much rougher and coarser than canal life and Garfield might well

¹ J. S. Brisbin, *Life of President Garfield*, p. 50.

² D. Piatt, *Life of Gen. Geo. H. Thomas*, p. 331.

consider that he was saved by good fortune from its degrading influence. But at sixteen it is hardly likely that he traveled very far on the downward path.

Whatever he may have meant by his words, it is certain that none of the depravity he hints at makes any appearance in his journal. From later remarks it appears likely that he acquired practice in profanity during these four months, and it is quite possible that that is all he referred to. At all events, his diary, when resumed after the episode, reveals no suggestion of any sophistication but continues to be the plain, matter-of-fact diary of a good, hard-working boy, quite indistinguishable in tone from the diary of 1848.

As time went on Garfield looked back on the experience with some retrospective sentiment and an element of humor. He mentioned it a few times in letters. "In the fall of 1848 I was bowsman on the 'Evening Star' running from Cleveland to Pittsburgh with a cargo of copper ore. I was dressed in coarse heavy oilcloth coat and pants and had all the appearance of a weather-beaten boatman."¹ But in 1862, having occasion to refer to his canal experience, he remarked (to his wife, February 15, 1862), "I dare not hope that many children will come up with as much will and so little restraint as I did without being ruined."

After one of his escapes from drowning, he was driven to think soberly of himself and his place in the world. It had been a particularly narrow escape, for the drag rope which he grasped began to unwind. He said: "I felt I was coming to drowning. At length, however, it held and I was able to draw myself up until I could get a breath of air above the stagnant, stifling water. It was midnight. My feeble calls for help elicited no response from the sleeping people upon the boat. I at length made a great struggle and drew myself upon the boat. I was curious to know what had caused the rope to stop unwinding and carefully examining it, I found that just where it came over the edge of the boat it had been drawn into a crack and there knotted itself. I sat down in the cold of the night and in my wet clothes and contemplated the matter. I was in a very impressionable state of mind

¹ Letter to Miss Rudolph, February 25, 1855.

naturally." Pondering upon the narrowness of the escape, he thought of his mother and her prayerfulness, reproaching himself for his thoughtlessness in not having once written to her, and came to the conclusion that it was special providence shown to him on her account. "I did not now believe," he said, "that God had paid any attention to me on my own account but I thought He had saved me for my mother and for something greater and better than canaling."

This mood could not last long, of course. "The next day," he recorded, "affairs went on as usual and I thought but little of the circumstances of the night. My strong will had settled upon the life of the sailor and it would be difficult to break it."

The canal experiment was brought to a stop after the fourth trip by an attack of malaria. "When we arrived at Cleveland," the journal reads, "I was taken sick with the fever and ague and on the 3d day of October came home with Charles Garfield." In the reminiscences of 1877 this return home was described in detail: "As I approached the door at about nine o'clock in the evening, I heard my mother engaged in prayer. During the prayer she referred to me, her son away, God only knew where, and asked that he might be preserved in health to return to her and comfort her in her old age. At the conclusion of the prayer I quietly raised the latch and entered. I will not attempt to describe the scene which followed. I did not know then how badly mother had felt over my departure. But I afterwards found out that it nearly killed her."

The sickness that followed was no slight affair. The journal with its accustomed brevity says: "I was confined to my bed 10 days and the[n] broke the ague. it staid off about three weeks It came again I employed Dr Butler but his medicine had little or no effect I continued to have the ague every day till January 10, 1849 I commenced doctoring with H Vincent & Dr Harmon of Chagrin Falls and since that time I have not had the ague although not able to work any." Additional details given in the reminiscences of 1877 show that it was a grave illness for the young boy. "I was attended by one of the old school physicians," he said, "and

was treated after the old style. I was given terrible doses of calomel. Only my powerful constitution ever could have saved me."

This long sickness and the weakness that followed it proved to be a turning point in the boy's life. "I still expected to go back. But my mother captured me. All the terrible months of my sickness she did not once repine or reprove me. She simply went about her duties quietly and permitted things to work themselves out. She had great trust in a Providence that should shape the ends of those who trusted in God. At length I began to talk about returning to the canal. I did not know for long years after this how that talk hurt her but she did not oppose me directly. She simply said: 'James, you are yet weak and if you go back to the canal, you will soon be sick again. I have been thinking the matter over and it seems to me that you better go to school this spring and then perhaps you can, by going again in the fall, be able to teach in the winter. If you can teach winters and want to go on the canal summers you will thus have employment all the year round.' I really did not feel well and the suggestion seemed to be just." To clinch matters, Mrs. Garfield offered him the combined cash of herself and his brother Thomas, seventeen dollars, to start with. "I took the money," he concluded, "as well as the advice and went to the Geauga Seminary."

It should be added that another influence came in to support that of his mother at this juncture. The first school he attended during his convalescence was in the log cabin close at hand, which at this time had for teacher a young man of more than ordinary capacity. Eighteen years later Garfield wrote: "Samuel D Bates, now a distinguished preacher of the gospel in Marion, Ohio, was that winter teaching the district school near my mother's. He had attended the seminary at Chester, and urged several of the young men to return there with him in the spring. Being yet too ill to return to my plan of becoming a sailor on the lake, I resolved to attend school one term and postpone sailing until autumn."¹

¹ C. E. Fuller, *Reminiscences of J. A. Garfield*, p. 2.

In the reminiscent letter of November, 1855, to his mother, in which Garfield reviewed the whole course of his boyhood, he wrote thus of these years: "Then there are the winter schools and the boys at play—the spelling schools and the scores of beaming faces there. Again the cut foot in the winter & Mother takes care of [me]—borrows books for me and I sit with the battered foot bolstered while I read all the newspapers—the history of Connecticut—'Putnam and the wolf' and all the battles of the old Revolutionary Fathers. I am well again, working with the carpenter on the little red house—and the next winter browsing cattle with Uncle Amos. Again I cut my foot and Mother takes care of me another six weeks.

"Winter and Spring pass and it is the harvest time. I go away to work, for the first time and wear away a month of homesickness—which seems of interminable length, thinking I could never be away from Mother again so long. It is spring again and I am chopping 100 cords of wood for Uncle Thomas. Then comes that strange wild three months of canal life when I was beginning to grow reckless and forgetful of the good influences of my early boyhood. It passes like a dream and I am lying for five long dreary months on a bed of sickness and everything fades from my view but the tender watchfulness and love of Mother. That dark winter passes and I am in Chester commencing to study. No greener boy ever started out to school."

Geauga Academy, situated in the town next eastward from Orange, on a high ridge gently sloping to the Chagrin River, was a plain wooden building near the hamlet which marked the center of Chester township. It was a typical "academy" of the period before high schools, supported by the fees of scholars, managed by a board of trustees who carried the risks and run by a small corps of teachers, few of whom had had any more advanced training than was provided in just such institutions. In 1849 the catalogue for the term when young Garfield first attended shows a faculty of eight, including a "preceptress" and a teacher of a primary department, and two hundred and fifty-two students, about equally divided between "males" and "females," who

were entitled to "common English branches" at three dollars for twelve weeks, or by paying fifty cents additional, the same with natural philosophy. For four dollars one could secure the "Higher English Branches with Latin and Mathematics." The religious persuasion of the principal, Daniel Branch, and of the teacher of mental and moral philosophy, Elder G. H. Ball, was Free-Will Baptist.

The journal tells the story of the first days with matter-of-fact terseness: "March 6. Tuesday. Orrin H Judd, William Boynton and myself went to Chester . . . hired a room and our board cooked of Mrs. Reed. 7. Wed. bought our books and some wood sot up stove. 8 Thurs. commenced studying Algebra Philosophy Grammar singing school eve. . . . Mar. 10 drewed wood. . . . Mar 14 begin to see into Algebra. Mar 19 Studying Fine times. etc" A letter to his mother, at the end of the month, March 31, gives an amusing picture of the sturdy lad enjoying his studies and swinging his axe: "My health is first rate for me and I think it is improving rapidly. I like the school better every day and I think I am learning very fast and if nothing prevents I shall get a good insight into Philosophy and Algebra. Our studies and evening schools keep us very busy but we chop wood enough to exercise us sufficiently. Nothing hinders us from learning if we wish to. Our provisions holds out very well. We have pork enough to last the whole term and flour enough to last a month longer. I have \$1.48 left and do not have to pay out much now. My bed broke down last week and I bought 75 feet of flax cord and I guess it will hold me now. We chop Saturday afternoons for Prof Branch and through the week chop our own and Mrs Reed's. There are upwards of 100 students here from all parts of the country and all appear very friendly. I remain yours. J. A. Garfield"

The boy enjoyed himself from the start with his natural philosophy and with his companions. A little girl in the same class, Lucretia Rudolph, destined nearly ten years later to be his wife, described him sitting at the end of a bench with one foot up and his hands clasped around his knee, reflecting seriously as the teacher explained how water kept its own level, and suddenly remarking, to the amusement of the

other scholars, "Why, that's why the water doesn't run out of the spout of a kettle."¹ The same little girl was walking toward the academy building one day when someone crossed behind her on an intersecting walk. Unable to see from the depths of her big sun-bonnet, she turned around to discover James Garfield, who smiled, said, "Remember Lot's wife," and continued on his diverging way.

During the short summer vacation the boy worked hard at the usual "odd jobs" earning a little money, chiefly in house-building. "July 6 Friday worked on frame. Very lonesome." Toward the end he worked in the hayfield three days for one dollar a day. On August 7 the school reopened and the boy returned, still determined to keep his head above water financially. "What I earned that summer," he wrote later, "was only sufficient to purchase what clothes I needed and help my Mother a little and when I returned to Chester in the fall I had absolutely only six cents in my pocket. This I threw into the church contribution box on Sunday for luck and started in." Ten days later he reported cheerfully to his brother Thomas: "I am boarding at Mr. Woodworth's. I get my board, room, bed, washing done and everything except wood and candles for \$1.06 $\frac{1}{4}$ per week, which will amount to \$12.75 for the whole term. I have taken a job with a young fellow of getting out and putting on siding for 75 cents per hundred feet. I intend if possible to earn five or six dollars this term which will help some. Tell Mother that I am not able to pay her anything but thanks for my coat but I am very glad to get it."

Aside from this woodworking the chief interest this term lay in the debating which, in those days of acute slavery agitation, constantly raised political subjects. August 28, 1849, he made his début: "Spoke in Zetelethian Society on the following question. Are the causes that tend to strengthen greater than those which tend to dissolve the American Union?" September 4 he showed himself a good protectionist: "Spoke in Lyceum on the affirmative of the following question. Would the exclusion of foreign articles

¹ Mrs. J. A. Garfield, July 21, 1912.

to encourage home manufactures conduce to public wealth? Had a good time."

At the end of this term, Garfield made his first important venture in the world by teaching, at the age of eighteen, a district school. The journal shows that he got a teacher's certificate and then hunted a school for several days in vain, but finally got in touch with the school directors at Chagrin Falls, who engaged him, October 22, to teach the district school "on the ledge" in Solon "four months (24 days) for \$12 pr month or 3 for \$13." He added grimly, "I expect trouble in the school," and he was not disappointed. Garfield's experience in securing this school was the beginning of what became a life habit with him, almost a superstition; namely, that he must never seek a position, but wait for it to be offered to him. In his journal for December, 1880, thirty-one years later, he referred to the "law of my life, never to ask for an office. I came to that resolution in 1849, after a few days' fruitless search for a school and have followed it ever since, until I have come to believe that should I violate the law I would fail."

The experience that followed was a strenuous test. Its progress can be traced day by day in the brief entries of the diary. A few extracts will serve to illustrate. "Mon. Nov. 5. Commenced my school, had seven scholars. They behave well" But troubles began almost at once. "Nov. 7. Had 16 scholars today. Scholars uneasy in the afternoon. Resolved to separate some of the boys so that they could not play so much. Nov 8 School went off nice. Found that separation had the desired effect. Spirits more buoyant than usual." But a few days later came a rough and tumble episode. "Nov. 13 Punished S. Herrington severely for disobeying and being saucy. He endeavored to fight me but he finally gave up and is now a good boy." Things must have been lively in that schoolroom, but the results were good, temporarily. On the nineteenth came Garfield's birthday and he entered appropriate sentiments. "Nov 19 This morning I am 18 years old. Rather young to have the care of a school consisting of a company of youth, several of whom are older than myself. Eighteen years ago the day star of my existence had just

dawned. I knew not the follies and miseries of human life, neither had guile entered my mouth. But now how changed. I am 18"

He presently found himself needing all the "guile" and physical strength at his command. On November 26 he wrote, with visible misgivings, "Large scholars coming in, feel rather dubious." "Nov 29. School rather noisy. I hardly know what to do. I cannot whip a scholar for making a noise and talking will not do any good. Here is a dilemma." The journal records the devices that he tried, and shows him sticking to his task through thick and thin, although the brief entry for many a day in December runs: "School as usual. Great care on mind." On January 4 came another explosion. "Compositions and declamations. A boy sixteen years old refused to obey me and was very saucy. I flogged him severely and told him to take his seat. He caught a billet of wood and came at me and we had a merry time. He vamosed."

In spite of all difficulties young Garfield finished out his time. On February 1 he recorded: "Today makes three months of my school. Concluded to teach longer, dont know how much." Toward the end he seems to have got his talkative and unruly scholars fairly well in hand, for the phrase "great care on mind" disappears and he actually wound up with an exhibition for the last day. He wrote, March 2: "School for the last time in District No. 2. There was about 100 persons in in the afternoon. School closed. Some regrets and some rejoicing. Feel that I have done my duty. Had an exhibition in the evening." So closed this first independent venture made by the eighteen-year-old boy.

Many years later Garfield uttered this reminiscence about this experience: "When I first taught district school, I formed and carried out this plan. After I had gone to bed at night, I threw back the bedclothes from one side of the bed. Then I smoothed out the sheet with my hand. Next I mentally constructed on this smooth surface my schoolroom. First I drew the aisles; here I put the stove, there the teacher's desk; in this place the water-pail and cup. in that the space at the head of the room. Then I put in the seats

and placed the scholars upon them in their proper order. I said, Here is John, with Samuel by his side; there Jane and Eliza; and so on until they were all placed. Then I took them up in order beginning next my desk in this manner: This is Johnny Smith. What kind of a boy is he? What is his mind and what his temper? How is he doing? What is he now as compared with a week ago? Can I do anything more for him? And so I went on from seat to seat and from pupil to pupil, until I had made the circuit of the room. I found this study and review of my pupils of great benefit to them and to me. Besides, my ideal construction, made on the bed-sheet in the dark, aided me materially in the work."¹

It was just after this district school closed that young Garfield underwent an experience of the highest possible importance in his personal history. This was his conversion and his joining the Disciples church on March 4, 1850. So important was this event and so profound were its results upon Garfield's career that it is well to consider briefly the somewhat striking peculiarities of that sect as it existed in Ohio at the middle of the nineteenth century.

Founded by two Scotch immigrants, Thomas Campbell and his more famous son, Alexander Campbell, it was marked on the theological side by a determined effort to reject all merely human creeds, even the great historical ones, such as the Nicene and the Calvinistic, and hold to the word of God strictly as uttered in the Bible. "Where the Bible speaks, there we speak; where the Bible is silent, there are we silent"—such was the formula constantly uttered by Campbell and his followers. The two leaders, father and son, settled at Bethany, far north in the "Pan-handle" of Virginia, between Ohio and Pennsylvania, and there Alexander Campbell presently founded a college to educate youth in his form of Christianity.

Radiating from Bethany as a center, the influence of this new teaching spread into Ohio and in the twenties and thirties made itself felt as an evangelizing force. Under the name of "Disciples of Christ," groups of converts gathered into societies which aimed to reproduce the apostolic

¹ B. A. Hinsdale, *President Garfield and Education*, p. 49.

churches described in the Acts and Epistles. Simplicity of worship and organization and a lively sense of fraternal union and hopefulness marked them off from the conventionally sober Presbyterians, while their strong emphasis upon exegesis of the text of the Bible gave them a more intellectual, less emotional attitude than that of the Methodists. In some features they suggested the Quakers, in others the Baptists, especially in the fundamental importance they attached to adult baptism. Feeling themselves to have found the true Christian policy, they took an attitude of opposition to all other sects, and talked hopefully of uniting all churches, through a new reformation, upon the Bible as the sole foundation.

It was just after the end of his district school that Garfield's religious life suddenly started into strong activity. With the Disciples conversion was not attended with the mental and spiritual agonies which were considered necessary in many of the older denominations. It was rather, under the teachings of Alexander Campbell, a voluntary acceptance of the Christian life, and, most especially, the experience of the sacrament of baptism by immersion. Fear of damnation and hell fire played almost no part in the process, but the regeneration of the nature through immersion took the foremost place. It constituted an actual "remission of sins." Young Garfield was born into a Disciple household and undoubtedly grew up with a child's general acceptance of the prevailing doctrines. In later life, he reported that, having seen immersions in a pool of rather stagnant water near Orange, he supposed that the sins of the baptized persons floated up to form the green scum which he noticed on the surface.¹

The entries in his journal during his second term at Chester show that he already took a somewhat critical attitude toward the preaching of Elder Ball. When Beach, one of the teachers, suggested that Job was an Arab, he said shortly, "Idea strikes me favorably," but when Ball maintained "that a man's conscience would never allow him to do wrong," he commented with boyish scorn, "That I consider a flimsy

¹ Mrs. J. A. Garfield, 1912.

theory"; and when the same elder endeavored to prove that the disciples were not baptized until they were converted, he sniffed, "I can't go his sentiments." He also took great exception to the reading of sermons, which he regarded as "a useless habit." He went regularly to meeting, which at Chester meant Baptist services, and except for the points above noted took things as a matter of course.

The journal account of his spiritual awakening is very brief. He attended meetings on February 17 and again on March 1, but the first sign of any personal emotion was when on March 3 he wrote: "At meeting by W. Lillie . . . feel considerably roused on the subject. Determined to investigate. Sun. eve. meeting Determined to obey the Gospel. Signified my intention of so doing." This was in the course of a "protracted meeting," *i.e.*, revival, in which the appeal for the unconverted to join the church was the burden of every service. On March 4 Garfield took the step. "Today," he wrote, in the Disciples' technical phrase, "I was buried with Christ in baptism and arose to walk in newness of life." He attended meetings twice a day all the rest of the week, filling in the diary with the customary phrases of interjacent joy. On March 10 he concluded: "Our little school house was filled to overflowing. The cause of God is prospering. In this place 17 have made the good confession and are rejoicing in the hope of eternal life. Thanks be to God for his goodness. By the help of God I'll praise my maker while I've breath."

It would be hard to overestimate the importance for the boy of this religious experience. It proved for him the means of releasing his whole emotional nature, not only in religious lines but in literary and educational fields, in social life and, in fact, in all directions. Furthermore, by its intimate connection with the peculiarities of the Disciples' life and manner of thinking, it had a powerfully limiting as well as stimulating effect, as will be abundantly shown in this and later chapters. Without any doubt this conversion in 1850 was the strongest single influence he received until, under the shock of war, he was torn loose from its control. Its importance as a turning point in his life was strongly felt by Garfield at the time. In his journal a few months later he wrote

October 1: "Two years ago I was taken with the ague in Cleveland. When I consider the sequel of my history thus far, I can see the providence of God in a striking manner. Two years ago I had become ripe for ruin. On the canal . . . ready to drink in every species of vice, and with the ultimate design of going on the ocean . . . I was taken sick; unable to labor, went to school two terms thus cultivating my moral and intellectual faculties, took a school in the winter, and greatest of all, obeyed the gospel. Thus by the providence of God I am what I am and not a sailor. I thank Him."

At this point in the narrative of Garfield's boyhood it is worth while to pause and review his progress. In one sense his was a typical career of the frontier and of the period. Garfield paralleled in Cuyahoga and Geauga counties, Ohio, between 1833 and 1850, what countless other country boys were doing in innumerable villages in every state in the Union, but particularly where New England blood and ancestry left their stimulus. Many an orator and essayist has pointed out the supreme value to manhood of the hard grinding conditions under which such boys had to grow up, as making them stronger and keener in fiber and as leading them the more truly to appreciate the meaning of a culture and education that had to be paid for by privation. While fully recognizing this truth, Garfield also saw another aspect, and in 1862, when in a mood of depression he wrote to a friend on his thirty-first birthday: "To some men the fact that they came up from poverty and singlehandedness is a matter of pride. There is, at times, a little touch of justification in my heart at what I have accomplished, but on the whole, reviewing it all, I lament sorely that I was born to poverty and allowed to catch up any or no chance habits of mind, body, morals, and manners and in this chaos of childhood seventeen years passed before I caught up any inspiration which was worthy of my manhood or which would lead me to begin to find the path of manhood and life. Hardly a day passes when some fortunate young son of early opportunities does not make me lament my inferiority to him. Reduce the questions of life to fight, storm, or any main strength operations and Spartacus and I can stand up erect

—but in the little great things of life . . . how sadly weak and inferior I feel. Let us never praise poverty, for a child at least.” (J. H. Rhodes, November 19, 1862.) What Garfield meant was the necessity of learning by voluntary effort all the things which a boy might acquire as habits from living in surroundings of culture and social amenities during the impressionable years of childhood. When his friends protested at the sweeping tone of his language, he made haste to say: “I have sometimes expressed my gratitude to that fortune which made me poor and forced me to make more efforts than I should have made had I been the inheritor of wealth. And I have no doubt that some natures are better developed under adversity and need obstacles and discouragements to bring out the mettle that is in them.” (Hinsdale, December 1, 1862.)

CHAPTER II
THE DISCIPLE SCHOOLBOY
1850-1854

THE period in Garfield's life which began when he resumed studying at Geauga Academy and lasted until he left for Williams College covered the years from eighteen to twenty-two, the years of adolescence and of the first great character-building impressions. They were for him years of expansion and upheaval, and of emotional experiences which, as will be seen, were almost wholly subjective. For nearly every change, every rise and fall of the inner tides, every arrival of a new influence it would be possible to make a minute chronicle, owing to the existence of his full and expressive diary. Add to that his letters and the examples of his early literary and oratorical efforts and the self-revelation is complete. With much that is naïve, and a great deal that is absurd and extravagant, these writings show us the picture of a singularly sensitive, aspiring and high-minded youth, struggling to adjust himself to the problems of this world and the next, during years of hard physical work and unremitting intellectual effort.

Quoting from the wealth of material only so much as is necessary to illustrate his life and growth and not exalting the episodes of that time beyond their real significance, it will be the purpose of this chapter to follow Garfield's career as schoolboy and teacher for five years of the first importance in his development.

The young man returned to Geauga Academy with his whole being in a state of ferment. All his work, his daily duties were illuminated by the new light, and his journal became dotted with pious ejaculations and short homilies. On March 25, for instance, after enumerating his studies,—Latin, algebra and botany,—he wrote, "Can see many beauties in each and especially Botany which teaches us to 'look

up through nature to nature's God,' and to see His wisdom manifested in the flowers of the field." Or, more briefly, the next day, "Mar. 26. Studying. Good times. Thank God for them." "May 1. This is the first day of May and still the progress of time is unabated. Month after month rolls round . . . and we are carried nearer to eternity at every revolution." "May 27. God's goodness again permits me to see the light of another pleasant morning. May I be ever thankful." On Sundays, determined to attend Disciples' meetings, he walked long distances, eight or nine miles to reach Mayfield or Chagrin Falls, and he was particularly zealous in attending baptismal services. "July 21. Jane Clark and Mary J. Fosselman were immersed in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ for the remission of sins. It is a sublime and solemn spectacle."

But religious enthusiasm formed only a part of his new emotional and intellectual life. Quite as marked was a sudden growth of theological combativeness which rapidly pushed the boy into an attitude of antagonism to his associates at the Academy. The mild disapproval which he had hitherto felt toward the orthodox sects sharpened instantly into active condemnation. In March, when recording the first meeting after the opening of school, he wrote in the journal: "Am sorry to hear folks pray for the Lord to baptise sinners with the Holy Spirit. Think it is wrong." After attending a Presbyterian service he protested: "It pains my heart to see the ignorance and bigotry that is abroad in the land. I wish that men would let all human traditions alone and take the Bible alone for their guide." Five months later his intolerance had grown to the point where he could write, "Aug 18. At meeting at Methodist house (an unscriptural name) . . . Heard a missionary. . . . He has done some good but it is adulterated with sectarianism."

At the same time he carried his religious purism into the field of politics, and began to query whether a true Disciple could participate in government. Not only that, he entertained doubts as to the religious correctness of antislavery doctrines, a position which was calculated to set him at odds with seven-eighths of his neighbors in the school or on the

Western Reserve. March 19, in debate, he opposed the immediate emancipation of slaves, and July 29 recorded in his journal the conclusion that "the simple relation of master and slave is not unchristian." On July 6 he "heard the Whig candidate for Governor, Johnson, stumping for office and was perfectly disgusted with the principle." Two months later he had traveled so far that he wrote, on September 5: "I have engaged to support in debate the following proposition; viz, that Christians have no right to participate in human governments. . . . It creates some excitement. Never mind. I love agitation and investigation and glory in defending unpopular truth against popular error. It looks to me like serving two masters to participate in the affairs of a government which is point blank opposed to the Christian (as all human ones must necessarily be)." From this lofty standpoint the young radical commented on a speech delivered October 2 by Joshua R. Giddings, the fighting Free Soil member of Congress from the Western Reserve, "I could not help but consider that the cause for which he was laboring was a carnal one."

It is not surprising that with such views, Garfield found his situation at Geauga Academy no longer agreeable. In addition he was conscious of social discrimination—something almost unique in his career. In spite of the fact that during the spring term he and Orrin Judd lived on "pudding and milk, bread and butter, cost about 50 cents per week," he found himself unable to meet expenses and after clearing up his debt by working all July he started the fall term without a cent. He was obliged to work four hours a day ("8 cents an hour") and to wear the cheapest clothes. August 17 he wrote: "I have a good opportunity to try the spirit of students by going dressed very humble viz. coarse striped shirt, patched pants, coarse boots, coarse rye straw hat. Some few (the off-scourings of creation) publicly sneer at me and many (not a whit better) do the same slyly by avoiding my company. I am glad that there are a few, however, who look only at real worth to prove the man."

A direct clash on religious matters between the board of trustees and the principal of the school, S. J. Fowler,—like

Garfield a Disciple,—proved to be the signal for the young enthusiast to break away from the “sectarian” institution. On hearing that Fowler’s endeavor to establish Disciple worship had been blocked by the Freewill Baptist authorities he wrote: “Oct. 11. I ever have seen and still see a sectarian spirit . . . which I fear will eventually destroy this school. I see that the free spirit of S. J. Fowler cannot and will not brook their restrictions. Nor will I.” When, on October 15, it was announced that the principal was going to leave, Garfield wrote “Good, Good,” and added, on the last Sunday, “This is the last time I shall attend a meeting here.” When the school closed, he left without a word of regret. The Geauga Academy to which he had gone with high hopes in 1849 had now become distasteful to him, wholly owing to his intense absorption in Disciple doctrines.

Garfield did not resume studying for nearly a year. In the meantime he earned money by teaching and house-building. His first school was at Warrensville, a town east of Orange, the contract price being four months at fifteen dollars a month with the stipulation that none of the pupils should be younger than ten or twelve years of age. This time the journal reports no such rough-and-tumble episodes as enlivened his first experience, possibly because the school had better material, but quite as probably because the young teacher had learned enough of the art of school management to relieve him of the necessity of flogging recalcitrants. When the term finally closed he wrote: “Feb. 21. After our examination of the principal classes the school closed with many regrets. I can truly say that I bear no ill-will toward any scholar in the school. I have not struck a blow with the whip this winter, although I have threatened some.”

The next school was in a region strange and uncouth in the eyes of the young Disciple. From March to June Garfield accompanied his mother on a visit to her brother, Henry Ballou, at Gaysport in Muskingum County, traveling by train to Columbus, thence by steamer and “skiff” down the Muskingum River. “It was my first ride on the cars,” Garfield said at a later time (interview of 1877). “At Columbus we passed all around taking in all the sights. I never shall

forget with what awe I viewed the State House and grounds and the penitentiary." The journal shows, however, that his lofty scorn for 'human government' led him to despise the legislature. "The members," he wrote, "were collecting for the work of the day. I confess I was not satisfied with the faces of most of them. Their rubicund, bloated faces spoke plainly of the midnight bowl and in my opinion unfitted them for representing the free people of a great state."

Garfield liked his cousins, Ellis and Orrin Ballou, worked with them on their farm and shared their diversions, but found little to approve in the life of the neighborhood. "In this place," he recorded, March 5, "the people are of a social nature and have each one a frolic—husking, logging, sawing and in fact any business which they have on hand. I do not think they make much." In a letter to his cousins, the Boynton girls, he made caustic criticisms: "There does indeed seem to be a want of that modest reserve and retiring deportment which so adorn the character of woman. There seems to be great boldness on their part. It is however, customary, but I regard the tendency to be very pernicious in its effect." (March 30, 1851.)

It was at Blue Rock, in this highly "social" region, that Garfield undertook to teach a district school, "3 months, 24 days to the month, for \$50." It was a rough experience. "I am teaching," he told his Boynton cousins (March 30), "in a miserable old log school-house with a tall stove in it for burning stove coal and furnished with four legged benches, and as smutty as a blacksmith's shop." He dug coal, when he needed it, from the bank behind the house. He began with seven scholars, a number which fluctuated daily, rising to fourteen, then seventeen, dropping to eight, rising again to twenty. Some were learning to read; one boy "could recite the alphabet downward but not upward"; and two were old enough to elope together in the middle of the term and get married. What he particularly disliked was the presence of small children. "It is indeed trying to my patience and also my stomach to have so many little ones about me. I believe it is the province of females to teach little scholars the rudiments. . . . I want something that has the thunder in it."

In addition the boys were so excessively pugnacious and unruly that he found nothing but physical punishment could control them. "As love is the stronger passion than fear," he commented, "it is better to govern by love as far as we can—but there are exceptions." So he soundly thrashed two boys and order prevailed in the school. But on May 19, disgusted with the lax attendance of his pupils, he suddenly threw up the job, having taught fifty days and "earned \$26.42 public money."

To add to his dissatisfaction there was little Disciple activity, and he felt himself "surrounded by sectarianism." When he attended a Methodist church he disliked the shouting and was horrified by the spectacle of a woman preacher. "May 18. Went to a Methodist meeting house on Crow River to hear a woman preach. Her name is Mitchell. She screamed loudly, frothed at the mouth &c. I could not help thinking of the words of Saint Paul." One day he inspected a German Catholic service and described the worship with the contemptuous curiosity one would pay to a barbaric ritual. "I noticed that the priest (a libel upon the name) seemed the least reverential of all." So Garfield fell back on his own reflections and recorded them duly in the journal. "There is a hill," he wrote (April 17), "near the school-house, whose hoary top I ascend in the morning before I commence school, and there contemplate the surrounding scenery. I there see the lofty peaks whose blue waving lines kisses the cloud in the depths of the blue cerulean. There is the place of meditation and communion with the Creator."

After returning by the Ohio canal, passing through the sections that Abram Garfield had built, twenty-four years before, the young theologian worked hard for two months, having "hired to Bro. Jedidiah Hubbell to work at the carpenter's and joiner's trade." The journal gives brief details of scoring, planing, putting on shingles, laying sills, etc., mingled with cheerful religious interjections. The services and doings of the Disciples church furnished the main diversion, the greatest excitement being the exclusion of "Bro Tinker" from the society. "May the Lord preserve the church from apostasy!" "We found him a very good hand

for the price," said George Woodward, the partner of "Bro Hubbell." "He was strong and ready to take hold of everything that came to him and ever anxious to learn all he could of the trade, although he told me he did not expect to follow the business. . . . Garfield worked until August 20th. Hubbell paid him the balance due him, which was fifteen dollars; he put it in his memorandum book, and that into his coat pocket, and throwing his coat over his arm he bade farewell to jackplane and hammer and started for home."¹

The school to which Garfield now transferred his interests was a distinctively Disciple institution, and so important a part in his life did it play that it is worth while to pause and note its characteristics. The "Western Reserve Eclectic Institute"—such was its ungainly name—was founded in 1849 by a group of zealous Disciples in order that their children might have the benefits of a "Christian" education, free from all taint of "sectarianism." The town of Hiram in the northern part of Portage County had been selected, because it was a prosperous farming region, and was a strong Disciple center. "Hiram too," says Hinsdale, later its president,² "offered a contingent subscription of four thousand dollars—no mean inducement to the trustees of a school that was not expected at its founding, to cost more than twice or thrice that sum." So a brick building was erected north of the village and the first term opened in November, 1850. It had been going a year when Garfield decided to attend it and it was still raw and crude, but the principal, A. Sutton Hayden, a successful Disciple preacher, and his colleagues, all equally devoted Disciples, had started in with the utmost zeal, and the pupils who had been drawn to the new institution shared their enthusiasm.³ Never did Garfield forget the strong impression made upon him by his new surroundings. Speaking at Hiram nearly thirty years later, June, 1880, he said of the Eclectic: "In 1850 the campus was a cornfield with a solid plain brick building in the centre of it. . . . It

¹ C. E. Fuller, *Reminiscences of James A. Garfield*, p. 5.

² B. A. Hinsdale, *President Garfield and Education*, p. 16.

³ F. M. Green, *History of Hiram College*, pp. 24-32.

was without a dollar of endowment, without a powerful friend anywhere, but with a corps of teachers who were told to go on the ground and see what they could make out of it, and to take their pay out of the tuitions that should be received; who invited students of their own spirit to come here, and find out by trial what they could make out of it.

. . . It was a simple question of sinking or swimming. . . . I do not know of any place, I do not know of any institution, that has accomplished more, with so little means, than this school on Hiram Hill. . . . The teachers and the students of this school built it up in every sense—made the cornfield into that handsome campus. . . . I believe, outside of the physical features of the place, that there was a stronger pressure of work to the square inch in the boilers that ran this establishment than any other I know of.”¹

Garfield’s journal shows that he attacked everything with an unquenchable ardor, Latin, Greek, where he had to recite with classes that were considerably in advance of him, and, before the term was over, geometry, “alone without class or teacher.” He listened to geological lectures by Professor John Brainerd, carefully summarizing his conclusions; he plunged into debates, “lyceums,” and above all religious meetings. Frequently he rose at four or five in the morning to study and sometimes sat up till midnight.

It is clear that Garfield as a student was of the intensely acquisitive type. He devoured his subjects, he strove to master every new science or line of thought. There was something combative in his attitude toward knowledge. In 1881 Harvey W. Everest, who knew Garfield both as fellow student and as teacher, said: “He did not study merely to *recite* well but to *know* and for the pleasure of learning and knowing. . . . He had a wide-awake curiosity which seemed never to be satiated. A new thing, however unimportant, always attracted his attention. . . . He was a master at condensed classifications, so that his memory easily held and reproduced what he learned.” Very significant was this also: “He had a great desire and settled purpose to conquer, to

¹ Hinsdale, *President Garfield and Education*, p. 19.

master the lesson, to prove superior to every difficulty, to excel all competitors, to conquer and surpass himself.”¹

Hinsdale notes this emphatically: “His love of victory, over men and things, was the strongest, but it was a love born of the noblest elements. He took no pleasure in a merely personal triumph; but a triumph that was a test of honorable superiority he keenly enjoyed. Here too may be mentioned his full appreciation and generous recognition of all men, even though competitors or opponents.” He quotes Garfield as saying, “If at any time I began to flag in my effort to master a subject, as working out a problem, I was stimulated to further effort by the thought, ‘Some other fellow in the class will probably master it.’” “In summing up the forces,” added Hinsdale, “that acted in Garfield’s life, what he thought the ‘other fellow’ was likely to do must never be overlooked.”²

These traits have already been indicated by his quotations from the journal, especially in debating. It should be strongly insisted that in Garfield’s case this was a thoroughly “sportsmanlike” attitude of rivalry or competition. It was wholly lacking in bitterness or conceit; it was completely lacking in the desire or willingness to hurt a competitor. What he wanted to do was to match himself against all others, not to trample on anyone. There is no evidence that those he surpassed in his classes felt resentment or bitterness at his success, chiefly owing to its impersonal character and its combination with Garfield’s perfectly generous recognition of their merits.

These first years at the Hiram school were a flowering time for the young man. Hope, ambition, courage, unending cheerfulness, radiate in all his letters and journals. He made sudden intimate friendships, he seems for the first time to have taken an interest in the gentler sex—in short he expanded joyfully in a congenial atmosphere.

Some of his fellow students have left their memories of his appearance. “My first recollection of him,” said one,³

¹ Hinsdale, *President Garfield and Education*, p. 32.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 33, 36.

³ Fuller, *Reminiscences of J. A. Garfield*, p. 31.

"is as a young man, looking all of twenty-years old, about 6 feet in height, powerfully built, with a head of bushy hair and weighing about 185 pounds. I remember him attired in Kentucky jean clothes with calico sleeves, ringing the bell for the opening of recitations." Another said: "His large head and massive frame had a suggestion of the overgrown; but he escaped awkwardness by the thought and purpose that controlled his action. . . . At the close of the morning lecture, before the students left the room, he would leave the chapel and ring the bell. His tread was firm and free, and the same unconscious dignity followed him then that attended him when he ascended the eastern portico of the Capitol to deliver his Inaugural address. He was modest and self-possessed and then, and always, absolutely free from any affectation whatever."¹

Fully as striking as his scholastic ambition, however, and much more absurd, was the great outburst of literary and poetical aspiration which effervesced in Garfield's journal and letters and found outlet in scores of stanzas and "eloquent passages." It is only by realizing the nature of the literary standards of the fifties in the United States and by calling to mind that Garfield's models were chiefly the sermon and the hymn book that one can do justice to the amusingly turgid effusions which he poured forth in these years. Even before he left Chester he began to try his hand, as witness the following description of the closing exercises. "July 2, 1850. The dawn of this day causes the beating of many hearts. The teams are continually pouring in from all parts of the state. The deep thunder is heard in the dim distance and the dark clouds, pregnant with rain are floating lazily along the cerulean. The loud thunder again bursts and the big drops of rain are hurled from the shivered bolt. The brows of the students contract as they fear for the fate of the exhibition. But the showers went round. Our friends arrived. People collected. The stage was prepared." At this same commencement he declaimed his first "original," *i.e.*, an oration written by himself. The beginnings of the future orator, who loved nothing better than to confront an audi-

¹ Hinsdale, *President Garfield and Education*, p. 26.

ence, were like those of any ordinary mortal. "Mar 23 Committed original before 9 then went to the chapel. . . . Confess that my knees trembled a little." But when it came to the exhibition he recorded his success in words of youthful bombast that had in them much that was prophetic. "July 2. I did better than I expected. The ice is broken. I am no longer a cringing scapegoat, but am resolved to make a mark in the world. I know without egotism that there is some of the slumbering thunder in my soul and it shall come out!"

From these beginnings, the zest in the "hifalutin" developed beyond all bounds. At the end of his very first term at Hiram, Garfield was called upon to deliver a valedictory, which, as printed in the reminiscences of Corydon Fuller, his admiring friend, shows the appalling extent to which religious sentimentality had permeated his whole phraseology. A few sentences will serve to illustrate.

"Three short months have been chronicled since a band of strangers met within these walls. We had left the society of friends and parents, the endearments of home, to seek the sparkling gems of science, to expand and elevate the mind, to raise the soul from earth and point it to the skies. . . . But these varied scenes with all their joys and sorrows are past. . . . What one of our number, ere another sunny spring visits the earth, shall have gone to inhabit the silent city of the dead? We part. Death does his work and we sink down into his dark domains. . . . We'll pass its dusky portals—eternity bursts upon our view—and there around the throne of God we'll meet to part no more."¹ Years were to pass before Garfield could shake off the paralyzing effects of this sermonizing manner of speaking and thinking, this acceptance of decorated religious commonplace as the highest form of literary expression. At the moment, without doubt, both teachers and pupils felt it to be extremely fine and profound, even "eloquent."

Garfield's journal during these years is dotted with "purple patches" of this same general style. Here, for instance, from 1851: "This is the last day of March and the blast drives hurriedly along. The storm king is abroad in his fury

¹ Fuller, *Reminiscences of J. A. Garfield*, p. 36.

and shrieks and howls fiercely at every opposing obstacle. The dreary outward world cause the mind to retire within itself and contemplate upon the great and wonderful destiny to which we are all hastening, to scan the events of the past and learn to avoid the errors and copy the virtues of those who have gone before us."

Still more delightful than solitary musing was social indulgence in gentle melancholy. "May 22. This evening five old Chester students, viz Marinda Raymond, Lucretia Rudolph, Cordelia Starke, O. H. Judd and myself, recounted the scenes of the past and lived over years that have been buried in the dust. There is a melancholy joy in reminiscences. A joy to call up bright scenes and kind friends and a sadness to know that they are scattered abroad over the earth never to meet upon the shores of time. But such reflections are profitable for they remind one of the fading and changing nature of all humanity." Nothing could be more typical of twenty years. Occasionally the journal slips into unconscious humor. "Feb. 21. 1852, teaching at Warrensville. Still I hope I may be with the ransomed host. I can find no enjoyment in society where there is no topic of conversation but raising hogs." Garfield insisted on soaring.

During the autumn and winter of 1851-1852 he had a great outburst of poetical fervor, writing dozens of stanzas in hymn book meters upon the usual religious themes or upon his own aspirations (October 4):

Why do we in the silent night
While darkness shrouds the earth,
Delve by the taper's dreamy light
For truths of countless worth?

To fit the soul—the immortal soul—
For mansions in the skies,
And there while endless ages roll
Our songs of praise shall rise.

Or nine stanzas in a slightly longer meter on his own twentieth birthday:

Just twenty years have rolled away
Since first I breathed the air of Heaven
O shall another natal day
To me upon this earth be given?

One finds in Garfield's own journals of many years after some half humorous comments on this period in his existence. On June 28, 1874, he had returned from Washington to Hiram, exhausted from the labors of Congress, and to divert himself, he says: "In the evening got out my journals of 1851-4 and read till after midnight. I am amazed at the gush and slush of those days. I was a very pulpy boy till I was at least twenty-two years old. But with all the rudeness and crudeness of those times, I was dead in earnest and was working by the best light I had. In looking over it now I am not ashamed of the most of it." The next year he had a similar experience. "Sept 2 1875. I spent most of the day in reading my diary for 1850-1853. The style is very stilted and gushing, so that I need to make some efforts to prevent being ashamed of these records. But I was dead in earnest and thoroughly determined to make all I could of myself and my opportunities." This was a just statement. It is unlikely that the boy had any unfavorable criticism, any curbing of his superlatives or pruning of his conventional imagery. Undoubtedly the thing he strove for was the ideal eloquence of the circles in which he moved, that of the Disciple preachers to whom he listened, above all of Alexander Campbell himself. Long years were to pass before the unfortunate direction thus given to his literary aspirations was to be modified.

A more profitable form of intellectual effort was that found in debating, which at Hiram, as in every other school and college in the United States, formed at that time one of the main diversions. There can be little doubt that it was rapidly coming to be one of his chief delights. He had begun the habit at Geauga Academy and continued it with ever increasing zeal. His journal shows him constantly engaged in "lyceums"—as such debates were termed—not only at Hiram but at Warrensville, Orange and Solon. On return-

ing to school in 1852 after the winter vacation he found it lonesome but wrote in the journal (March 23): "Study will wear off that feeling and soon we'll wake the slumbering echoes of the old Eclectic and make its classic halls resound again with the fiery clashing of debate and forensic declamation."

In the spring of 1852 he carried over his debating enthusiasm into a new field by challenging an itinerant freethinker and spiritualist to joint discussion. The journal is disappointingly scanty. "May 24. Challenged Mr J Treat for alternate half-hour speeches at the Methodist house this evening upon the spirit rappings. There was considerable excitement. Some threatened to attack me if I attempted to speak but everything went off orderly and we had quite a warm discussion." Fuller, in his *Reminiscences*, gives a description of this episode. Treat, whom he calls a "miniature edition of the Bob Ingersoll style of philosopher, with less brains, but more impudence and egotism," was accustomed to challenge anyone to answer him at the end of his lecture, which consisted of an attack on Christianity and the Bible. One of the teachers of the Eclectic, Professor Munnell, a Disciple preacher, made an attempt to answer him and was roughly handled in return by the unscrupulous debater.

When Garfield arose for his half-hour speech, he was aiming not only to discredit the freethinker but also to avenge "Brother Munnell." Beginning quietly, says Fuller, he observed that "he hardly knew what to say in answer, but he would like to ask him one question. Would he be so kind as to tell the audience what was the present participle of the verb *to be*, in Greek, or, in other words, the Greek word to correspond with the English word 'being'? Mr. Treat made no answer and Mr. Garfield challenged him to answer, "but," says Fuller, "the poor man did not know. Then, turning to the audience he asked them what they thought of a man traveling over the country criticising the work of the world's great scholars when he did not know the very first thing the schoolboy learned in his Greek grammar. He took pains to explain that he did not reproach the gentleman because he

had no knowledge of the Greek, but because he sought to overthrow the Christian faith and dethrone the Christian's God while passing himself off under false colors—pretending to knowledge he did not possess." As an argument on the merits of the question this debater's device was obviously irrelevant, but as a means of ruining the prestige of an antagonist it was crushingly successful. "It is impossible," said Fuller, "for me to give any idea of his speech or of its effect upon his audience. . . . The applause was constant and deafening. He spoke with a readiness and power and eloquence which were perfectly overwhelming. I do not think that Mr. Treat ever attempted another speech at Hiram."¹ The boy of twenty-one was clearly a dangerous opponent.

It should be noted that Garfield's debating zeal by no means indicated any diminution in his religious interests. He was never tired of attending Disciple services, and especially enjoyed the "protracted meetings," which were somewhat in the nature of revivals. The scruples against other churches and against politics which had driven him from Chester continued to develop, until it seemed as though he were approaching the status of what was then termed a "come-outer"; that is, a person too good, too lofty to associate with ordinary human doings. "Oct. 12, 1851 Went to a love feast at the Methodist house. They related experiences and partook of bread and water in token of their love and union. I find no such command in the word of God." "Dec 7. Have been reading Nelson on infidelity. A very good book. Have also read 'The Bible against War,' by Amos Dresser. Some good things in it. He is, however, sectarian and so also is Nelson."

In the midst of the presidential campaign of 1852 he wrote scornfully. "I am profoundly ignorant of its multifarious phases and am not inclined to study it. I am exceedingly disgusted with the wire-pulling of politicians and the total disregard of truth in all their operations. Miserable, low ungentlemanly trash fills the columns of the political press, unfit for refined feelings, tender consciences or kind hearts." On November 2 he congratulated himself on lack-

¹ Fuller, *Reminiscences of J. A. Garfield*, p. 54.

ing seventeen days of being old enough to vote for President. "I think however," he added, "I should not have voted had I been twenty-one years of age." He was, of course, strongly opposed to war. "Sept 19, 1851. Public Lyceum. Question. . . . Can war ever be justifiable under any circumstances? I on negative." Oddly enough in the midst of this radical "non-resistance" appeared the following: "Aug 27 1852, Lyceum this evening. Resolution that an enlightened nation has a right to take possession of land occupied by savages. . . . I was on the affirmative, but the negative gained the discussion. I am inclined to think, however, that the affirmative is on the right side."

During these years Garfield supported himself to a considerable extent by carpentering. In the autumn of 1851 he again taught district school at Warrensville, but it proved to be an irksome experience, not because of disciplinary difficulties, but because Garfield, in his burning zeal for scholarship, could not endure the intellectual torpor of the girls and boys, and their too great zest in winter parties, sleigh-rides and balls. Writing to Fuller, January 16, 1852, he said: "I have never worked harder in the hayfield than I work in school this winter. . . . Some scholars seem to have acquired a distaste for study which all my ingenuity cannot eradicate." And again, February 14: "Oh, that I possessed the power to scatter the fire-brands of ambition among the youth of the rising generation and let them see the greatness of the age in which they live and the destiny to which mankind is rushing."¹ The fact was that Garfield had outgrown district school teaching and he never turned to that field again.

In the summer of 1852 he returned to house-building, working at seventy-five cents a day. His friend Fuller was similarly engaged and the two young men frequently visited each other after working hours. "We used to lie awake," said Fuller, "and talk of the past and the future and build air-castles; we were both young; he was strong and vigorous and I was in good health and hopeful and we spent very little time in regretting that we had not plenty of money

¹ Fuller, *Reminiscences of J. A. Garfield*, p. 46.

we had not earned. I think we both prided ourselves on working our way and we *knew* that we were better scholars than those whose bills were paid without any exertion on their own part."¹

Writing to his family, August 8, Garfield said: "I perhaps never worked harder in my life than I have done for the last three weeks, getting out flooring, quarrying stone, digging cellar, framing, scoring timber, and all the work incident to house building. From these circumstances my fingers are stiff and lame, hence unfit for writing. . . . Mother if I bring home some of my old clothes can you fix them up for me? I shall be obliged to wear patched clothes, but if I ever get through a course of study I don't expect any one will ask me what kind of a coat I wore when studying and if they do I shall not be ashamed to tell them it was a ragged one."

By the winter term of 1852-1853 Garfield had about exhausted the resources of the Eclectic, except in the Classics. In order to continue his Latin and Greek, under Norman W. Dunshee, a teacher who had a considerably deeper scholarship than most of his colleagues, he assumed the functions of a teacher and took charge of introductory classes in arithmetic, grammar and Greek. In addition he started a class of his own in penmanship, a subject he had studied the previous winter, as a source of revenue, "part at 75 cts, the rest at \$1." His hands were full,—there were ninety-one in the arithmetic class,—but he still struggled to keep up his studies, reading Horace, Xenophon and the Greek Testament. When the second term began, March 21, he undertook still more burdensome labors. "I have six classes to teach and every other day recite in Xenophon's *Memorabilia*." Soon he had over seventy in grammar and arithmetic, with fifty-odd in the four advanced classes, yet on April 17 he added a class in Virgil and the next day began a class in penmanship with forty members. From now on he was practically a member of the teaching staff and needed to use the saw and plane no more.

At this same time Garfield took another step, of considerable importance in his career, by beginning the practice of

¹ Fuller, *Reminiscences of J. A. Garfield*, p. 46.

preaching in Disciple pulpits. The church founded by Alexander Campbell did not have any definitely ordained ministry, and it was open to any member who showed sufficient ability to be invited to preach to a congregation. Garfield had "spoken in meeting" for years, but now he undertook to deliver a formal sermon. The journal runs: "March 27 Attended the meeting of the brethren in Freedom. But few (14) at the meeting. . . . I spoke $\frac{3}{4}$ of an hour in the afternoon on 'Divine Providence.' This is my first attempt to speak away from my own congregation anything more than a mere exhortation." The next Sunday he spoke at Mantua for Brother Sanford—"the first time I ever spoke from the desk. . . . I tremble when I think of the step I am taking and feel my weakness." But soon he was speaking at Mantua again, then at Franklin, and finally at Ravenna and Aurora. By the end of the year he had come to be so successful a sermonizer that he was called upon to speak somewhere nearly every Sunday. "After I get to speaking," he noted, "I feel very calm and collected. I know not why, I am almost alarmed, fearing it is a kind of self-confidence." The fact was, he was discovering his forte, that of a public speaker and orator, as already indicated in his debating.

By the spring of 1853 it looked as though his path in life lay straight before the young religious enthusiast. His capacity as a teacher was proved, and to that he had added the ability to preach acceptably to the Disciple congregations within reach of the Eclectic. Not only was he freed forever from the necessity for manual labor, but the future, so far as the Disciples church was concerned, seemed secure. With his intense theological interests, his absorption in the doings and habits of the denomination, he could count on rising to whatever of power and influence there would be in the position of an educational and religious leader.

To Garfield himself, however, the situation presented itself very differently, for no sooner had he established himself as a teacher in the Eclectic, than he began to ponder over the next step. On January 1, 1853, he had made this entry in his journal: "Never were my plans for the future so doubtful. There are three courses in my mind. 1st, If this

Institution should be chartered so as to graduate its students, continue here; 2nd, I intend to attend the Commencement at Bethany at July and if I should be pleased with things there, commence in October next; 3rd There is a wandering thought (breathed to but few) in my mind of making a writing tour in the Southern States next fall and winter and then in the Spring enter Yale College to seek truth under the aged elms of that time-honored Institution.

. . . I trust it all to the hand that has brought me thus far on the journey of life and believe that God is preserving me for some wise purpose." By a writing tour he evidently meant a tour in which he should support himself by giving lessons in penmanship. If the young man had acted promptly along these or similar lines, he would have saved himself a year or more of discomfort, but Garfield was now beginning to show one of his most characteristic traits—a strong disinclination to make any change, even though it was one that he felt to be wise and desirable, so long as the occupation in which he was engaged was not actually unendurable.

The program which he sketched on January 1, 1853, was only in part carried out, and instead of teaching but one term more at Hiram, he was to remain three. What stepped in to hinder him in all probability was the fact that in this winter he passed through a tremendous emotional upheaval, which for a time deprived him of all power to make far-reaching decisions about his own future. It is the common experience with young people that such epochs of optimism, enlargement of vision and self-confidence as Garfield experienced from 1850 to 1852 are followed by a more or less violent reaction. As a rule such a period of doubt and self-distrust occurs somewhat earlier than twenty-one, but early or late it seems to be psychologically necessary in human development. In Garfield's case it was quite impossible that he should continue indefinitely in the state of rather sugary and romantic optimism that had characterized him since the "conversion" of 1850. It was high time that the young man, twenty-one years of age, should look himself and the facts of

life squarely in the face and should try to force himself to act against the tendencies of his surroundings.

What seems to have been the starting-point, the exciting cause for an emotional cyclone was the discovery on his part that a love affair in which he had been romantically dreaming for over a year had really nothing in it but the excitement of flirtation, of pursuit and the youthful satisfaction of "being in love." The story needs no detailed telling. It made its first appearance in the pages of the journal in the form of cryptic entries in abbreviated Latin—"tener. amicit. cum pulch. pu."—but the import is clear enough. The "puella" whom he found increasingly fascinating was the daughter of a prominent Disciple, living not far from Orange, and the romance developed during the winter and spring of 1852, when every journey home from Hiram managed somehow to lead by her house, usually toward nightfall, so that he might, if fortunate, hope for a moonlight walk "cum pulch. pu." It was all utterly naïve and youthful and, as might have been foreseen, written in water. It was in the winter of 1852-1853 that it rather suddenly dawned on the young man that in reality he did not wish to marry the young lady, and this discovery seemed to shake him to the very center of his soul. With most striplings the fading away of a first love affair is not a serious matter, except for a momentary sense of disillusionment, but Garfield was a young man of strong passions, tightly held in check by a powerful will and a profound religious faith, and the revelation that he had been utterly self-deceived unsettled the foundations of his belief in himself. "Can I enter the secret chambers of my own heart and soul and there see and know whether real honesty is there?" he asked himself in his diary, December 18.

After some weeks of hesitation he sought to escape from a situation that had grown wholly false by writing the young lady a letter, explaining that he could never be more than a friend. A painful explosion followed, more letters, an interview, an outburst of gossip and savage criticism from the friends of the injured girl as well as from many who felt him to blame on general principles. With this he sank

into a mood of black gloom that lasted for months, plunged deeply into introspection and followed his dark thoughts through page after page of his journal, treading round and round the circle of the problem as to whether he had done right in breaking the romance and constantly reproaching himself for ever having been involved. "Feb 5. To the first view of life, the world and society seem pleasant and alluring," he wrote bitterly, "but when their depths are penetrated their secret paths trod, they are found hollow, soulless and insipid. Selfishness rules the human heart and governs the actions of men. This almost gives me a distrust of mankind—myself among the rest." Again: "March 2. Like any other machine, stern and spiritless I have made my appointed revolutions. . . . The past seems a continued delusion and the earthly future like a sterile waste—a scorching desert, treeless and flowerless."

His enjoyment of things forensic turned to ashes; he could see only flaws where hitherto he had recognized the joy of intellectual companionship. "It is useless," he wrote to Fuller, April 9, "for me to tell you the state of the things in the Philomathean Society. There is a good deal of zeal and energy there—so there is in a dromedary. I sat last night as critic and endured the 'had comes,' 'proces,' scowls, genuflexions and circumgyrations of the Pennsylvanian; the sepulchral tones of the Geographer; the 'iron heel of despotism,' 'Greece and Rome,' 'rock-ribbed mountains,' and 'everlasting hills' and all the other hackneyed phrases which abound among men of the monkey genus; add to this the mangling of grammar, logic and rhetoric and you can perceive the patience necessary to preserve one's temper as well as gravity, and also how much pleasure and benefit I derive from my literary associations."¹

Even his religious interests failed him. In the despairing hope of finding comfort he attended the Disciple services with the utmost intensity, but even there his doubts followed him and challenged his sincerity. "April 10. Listened to two sermons from Bro Rider but to record the mental and spiritual history of myself is a far different thing. I have been

¹ Fuller, *Reminiscences of J. A. Garfield*, p. 76.

considering myself, my own heart, motives, life and actions in the light of eternity and the great Revelation of God to man. The world appears to have no lasting charms for me and aside from the hope presented in the word of God there is nothing in life worth living for. . . . After all that I may hear there seems to be something within me, I cannot name it, that whispers fearful words into my heart. It tells me that I'm not honest, that this is all a pretense on my part—that there is no such thing as human sincerity or real honesty."

It was doubtless his sense of self-distrust and lassitude after this severe emotional upheaval that led Garfield to defer carrying out his plan of continuing his studies in some more advanced institution. The day before the exhibition he recorded: "I have consented to teach here another year for \$800 or \$80 a month. I scarcely know whether it is a wise step or not. I need the next ten years' experience to start with now." This action was typical of Garfield throughout life. The one thing he found most difficult to do was to break away from any occupation in which he was engaged even when he felt that, as a matter of judgment, he ought to do so. In this case he spent three more terms at the Eclectic, teaching Greek, Latin and mathematics and studying one class in Demosthenes, "the most complex Greek I have read." That his working habits continued undiminished to the end is indicated by an amazing schedule of his daily routine which he sent to his cousin, Phebe Boynton (May 26, 1854): "At 5 in the morning, Virgil. Breakfast. Writing copies. 9 o'clock Grammar, Greek class, Algebra, Dinner. In the afternoon another Algebra class, the Sallust, (Latin) and Geometry and another Greek. After supper a writing class of two hours in length then 'Glee Club' till 7½ o'clock and then Phrenological Lecture till nine and one half o'clock. Then study till eleven."

During this last year Garfield regained his social poise, as his emotional storm died away, and the last nine months of his stay at the Eclectic were times of much contentment and renewed interest in people and affairs. It may be added that the "*pulchra puella*" seemed to feel more anger than sorrow, did not in any sense pine away but continued in the

school, had a part in the exhibition of 1853 and, returning in the autumn, was actually a member of one of Garfield's classes. The first marked signs of emotional convalescence appeared in the journal of the summer of 1853, when Garfield was spending a month in study at the Eclectic, reading Homer and Virgil. "I am rooming alone," he wrote to his mother (July 29), "in my little room in the orchard. I have never had a better time for study in my life. There are ten of us here studying and Bro Dunshee teaches. He is a very fine scholar and one of the best men and Christians I know of." In these weeks the bitter reflections and anxious self-questionings gradually ceased to be recorded and more courageous thoughts took their places. "July 30. I will now try to live in the present. I have too long lived in the past and future. . . . I have been dreaming all my life and framing mighty plans and transactions of which I was always the hero." And constantly the feeling of religious faith renewed came to expression. "The hand of the Lord has been with me and He has preserved me for some purpose, I know not what."

By the beginning of the autumn term Garfield was again able to enjoy his work and his friends, but the effects of this tremendous inner upheaval were destined not to wear off for many years. The breaking of the romance, which with almost any other man would have been a wound promptly healed, shook his self-confidence to its very foundations and made him for years as abnormally distrustful and self-analytical in his relations with the other sex as he had hitherto been thoughtless and naïve. At the same time he could not change his nature. "I am so constituted," he wrote in his journal (January 1, 1853), "that I cannot enjoy a cold formal friend, (a misnomer) but must be as familiar as to a brother or to a sister to enjoy them." Doubtless this had much to do with his thoroughgoing adoption of the Disciple habit of calling all fellow believers "Brother" and "Sister." In the autumn of 1853 he set forth his intentions in numerous places. "I am almost despairing," he wrote (November 30), "of ever bringing my social faculties under control. There is in my nature so much of the adhesive and familiar, it works

to my disadvantage in society. . . . I *do* intend to reform in reference to this subject both for my good and the good of those around me." At the time he did undoubtedly reform whatever was excessive or overemotional, but his inner nature he could not alter, nor was a lifetime long enough to diminish the deep craving for affection which was to be at once his strength and his weakness.

Under the sway of his resolutions for self-improvement, Garfield substituted for his juvenile sentimentalism regarding the other sex, a more restrained yet genuine friendliness, establishing a new habit which persisted through life. Whatever the rigorous self-repression that it cost, the outward bearing was maintained and the results, as tested by time, were admirable. The "girls" he knew in the last year at the Eclectic remained friends thereafter and recalled him, when looking back from middle age, as the inspiring teacher, the kindly associate and the unsentimental and amusing companion.

Among his friends a few deserve mention. Corydon Fuller, already mentioned, was his confidant in soaring aspirations during the whole period. Charles D. Wilber, later Garfield's roommate at college, was a very different sort of man, inclined to be satirical at the expense of his friend, for he occasionally poked fun at his overearnestness as in a letter of January, 1854: "Well, James, either your cauldron is not large enough or your fire is too hot. . . . You *do* see a great deal of emptiness. . . . Now James, . . . this is mere boyishness. . . . The more you reflect and think the more you will find; enough to occupy your highest powers. Don't rage any more, James, don't." More important than either of these was a woman, Almeda A. Booth, whom Garfield came to know as a fellow pupil in Dunshee's Greek classes, where he acquired an immense respect for her intellectual powers. With his inveterate habit of matching himself against any classmate he presently discovered that she was a person whom he simply could not surpass. "I have many times said," he wrote, years later (V. P. Kline, January 7, 1876), "that she was the only person with whom I ever studied in my college course whose mind met mine at

every point with absolute fulness and power and a clearness and grasp that made me proud to be reckoned anywhere near her equal."

Garfield found, in addition, that Miss Booth was not merely a bookworm but a woman of positive powers of thought on all subjects, and since she was nine years his senior, and far wiser than he in knowledge of human nature, he soon made her his guide, adviser and confidante on all lines. Before her, for criticism and judgment, he laid everything and from her he received penetrating and often unsparing, if kindly, comment. In some ways it seemed an odd friendship, for Miss Booth, in addition to being so much older, was a woman of exceedingly rugged features and quite lacking in feminine charm, but it was wholly beneficial for the young man to have her influence to restrain his too explosive temperament. "I can truly say," he wrote in his journal for 1854, "that I have never met with any person, save my own dear Mother, who has been of so much advantage to me in thinking, reasoning and living as has Almeda A. Booth." Years later, in a memorial address after her death, he said: "We shall never forget her sturdy, well-formed figure, . . . the strongly-marked features of her plain rugged face, not moulded according to the artist's lines of beauty, but so lighted up with intelligence and kindness as to appear positively beautiful to those who knew her well."¹

Far more important in Garfield's life than any of the foregoing was the friendship he formed with Miss Lucretia Rudolph, which, in the spring of 1854 ripened into a true romance, effacing the "false dawn" of two years before. She was the daughter of Zeb Rudolph, a leading citizen of Hiram, a devout member of the Disciples church and one of the founders of the Eclectic Institute, had been Garfield's schoolmate at Chester and had known him ever since; but being a young woman of extremely reserved, quiet manners, not prepared to discuss the state of her soul with any friend, as Garfield desired, she had not attracted his special atten-

¹ B. A. Hinsdale, ed., *Works of James A. Garfield*, Vol. II, p. 313.

tion until the year 1853. It was in December of that year that the young man, holding himself rigidly in hand and determined to take no rash step, began a cautious courtship by guardedly addressing a letter from Niagara Falls, "Lucretia, My sister. Please pardon the liberty I take in pointing my pen towards your name," and following this with another, to "Much respected sister." By December 31 he was willing to confide to his journal a glowing appreciation of her qualities, concluding, however, with these cautious sentences. "There is one question I have not yet settled . . . viz whether she has that warmth of feeling, that loving nature which I need to make me happy. . . . For myself I feel that under the proper circumstances, I could love her and unite my destiny to hers. With regard to her feeling upon it I am not certain."

The courtship thus begun went on its way through the winter, always guarded and tentative. "I hope," wrote Garfield in his journal (February 25), "by the assistance of my Heavenly Father to move cautiously and judiciously in reference to the sacred subject of matrimony." By the end of the spring the two young people had arrived at an "understanding"—more it could not be called. "We love each other," he wrote in his journal (June 24), "and have declared it but are both determined to let our judgment rule in the matter. . . . Time which changes all things may make changes in us or in our circumstances." The fact was, Garfield could not yet wholly trust himself. In reaction from his first failure, he doubted the strength of any emotion he might feel until it should have been tested by time. "There is no delirium of passion," confessed the romantic young man, "nor overwhelming power of feeling that draws me to her irresistably. Now I do not know as there should be, but feel inclined to be cautious and so does she." On her part Miss Rudolph, remembering the shipwreck of her careful admirer's first romance, was well content to wait for further proofs.

By the time that this matter of the heart had reached this stage, Garfield had come to a decision regarding his next step in education, a conclusion that was arrived at with great

deliberation and much pondering. The first move was made when, in the summer of 1853, he paid a visit to Bethany College in company with his cousin, William Boynton. On the religious side the journey was a pilgrimage to the feet of Alexander Campbell, the founder and leader of their church, and when, after reaching the college, the two young men not only heard him preach but visited him and attended family prayers in his house, Garfield was stirred to the deepest reverence. "I must say," he wrote in the journal (July 3), "he is a living wonder. When in his company you feel the shadow of his greatness falling upon you; he is a new man every time you meet him, for his mind seems to be taking a sweep through the universe and is enlightening new objects at every inch of its orbit. Thus far in his course, systems have been crushed before him, truth has blazed around and peace and righteousness have followed in his train."

But on the academic side Garfield admitted disappointment. At the exhibition of the Neotrophian society he "was much surprised to see so little logic and less good sense displayed," and at the Commencement he was still less pleased. "There was a vein of flattery running through almost every speech, i.e. flattering the ladies,—and a kind of noisy patriotism which ill comports with the feelings of our Ohio people. . . . I cannot endure that southern dandyism, so interwoven with the manners of many of the students there." To Fuller, writing July 19, after describing the village "girt about with everlasting hills," he added: "The place is very romantic but I was very much disappointed in the talent. . . . Suffice it to say that a good, determined thorough Northern boy, of *mens sana in corpore sano* can go there and lead them through the course."

The result of this visit was to make Garfield think less favorably of continuing his studies at Bethany, in spite of the presence of Alexander Campbell, and in spite of the fact that he could graduate there in a single year while to gain a degree in an eastern college might require two. With a clear-sightedness hardly to be expected of a man in his situation he set forth his problems in his journal on Decem-

¹ Fuller, *Reminiscences of J. A. Garfield*, p. 89.

ber 31, 1853 in an interesting bit of self-analysis: "In the last year my mind and judgment have become somewhat matured and I am acquiring some independence of thought, still I am very much influenced by my friends, perhaps too much—not because it is not better for me to follow their advice, but because it tends to weaken one's decision of character. I have made but two or three *real mental* efforts this year. I mean by this concentrating my whole mind upon a given subject long enough to form full and definite conclusions. I have trusted too much to the inspiration of the occasion, and prided myself too much on *impromptu* efforts. I have become somewhat mentally lazy, or rather mentally careless. I have been too easily satisfied with myself." There can be little doubt that this was a correct judgment: for he put his finger on the danger of the life he was leading, teaching elementary subjects that demanded little effort, and preaching, according to the Disciple custom, only extempore sermons.

In the course of the winter Garfield wrote to several institutions asking the terms on which he could be admitted, with a view to sifting their various advantages. In all except Bethany he found that his studies at the Eclectic had been so irregular that he would have to take two years to get a degree, and this, in view of the fact that he would have to earn his way, seemed a formidable drawback. In addition he would have to study in a Calvinistic atmosphere, which to a Disciple was highly repellent. "It is strange to me," he wrote to Fuller (May 13), "that any set of Christians can hold so tenaciously to any dogma so cold and comfortless as the Calvinistic faith and at the same time regard the gospel as a scheme of benevolence and even-handed justice. Certainly I could never rejoice in such a gospel."¹

Nevertheless the decision was against Bethany and in favor of Williams College, for reasons which he set forth in a long memorandum in his journal, June 23, justifying what might appear a rash course.

"It has been my cherished thought for years to sit at the feet of our beloved and mighty Brother A. Campbell of

¹ Fuller, *Reminiscences of J. A. Garfield*, p. 114.

Bethany College. But the sum of my reasoning upon that point is this: I am the son of Disciple parents, have always lived among Disciples, listened to their preachings, have become one myself and have for some years been a teacher among them. Now I know that every denomination (for even those who oppose sectarianism seem themselves to be a sect) has its peculiar views and distinctive characteristics. Each is accustomed to look at the world and all its belongings from one particular standpoint. . . . Now any person who always looks at things from one point of view must have imperfect conceptions and illiberal views of human nature and thought in general. . . . Hence I thought best for the sake of liberalizing my mind, to spend some time in the atmosphere of New England which is so different from that of our Western Institutions, both in Literature, Politics and Religion. This together with the objections to Bethany that it is too pro-slavery in its views and too superficial in its instruction is the reason why I did not go to Bethany. I could easily graduate there in ten months but it will take two years in an eastern college.

"I then commenced the work of deciding to which of the Eastern College I would go. I wrote to Yale, Brown and Williams. There was an aristocratic face that seemed to display itself at Yale from what little I could learn that I did not like. The letter I received from Prof. Wayland [of Brown] had so much of rigid sternness that I instinctively shrunk away from it. There was one clause in Pres. Hopkins' letter that made me feel more of drawing toward him. Perhaps it may seem boyish but here it is. 'We shall be glad to do what we can for you.' I had read part of his Lowell lectures in the 'Evidences of Christianity' and that also prejudiced me in his favor. I found upon inquiry that Williams had almost as good a reputation in New England as any other. Horace Mann advises young men to go to Williams. These then are my reasons for going there in preference to Bethany and others."

The evidence of cool judgment and of latent liberality of thought on Garfield's part in coming to this decision need hardly be emphasized, for during the years before he made

it every new tie and every religious habit that he formed seemed to be forcing him more and more deeply into the customs and ideals of the Disciples' denomination. It was, without much doubt, the unfavorable impression produced on him by the frothy declamation of the Bethany Commencement in July, 1853, that proved the decisive element. Greatly as he venerated Alexander Campbell he cared still more for genuine educational thoroughness.

Changes in his family circumstances aided in turning his mind to new directions. By the spring of 1853 Thomas Garfield had come to the conclusion that the little Orange farm of only thirty acres was too small and unprofitable, and, having married, he felt that he ought, for the sake of his own future, to find some better location. The upshot was that the old place was abandoned by the family, Thomas Garfield moving to Michigan and Mrs. Garfield going to live with her daughter, Mary Larrabee, at Solon. On October 9 there was a last reunion which Garfield described in his journal with deep feeling: "Visited the spot where the Old House stood and wrote down some thoughts. Mary and Hitty came down and after meeting we visited for a short time and had supper having the whole family together, and our dear Mother with us to wait on the table, (she did so from choice) We shall in all human probability never all thus again be together. Tomorrow Thomas starts for Michigan. Our Old Home (I must commence the word with a capital) is sold and the old familiar scenes of boyhood will be desecrated by the hand of strangers. Who knows the stirrings of soul—the throbbings of youthful ambition? the laying of plans and building of bright fabrics visionary and wild for the future that cluster round and consecrate the memory of that place!"

This abandonment of the birthplace, the scene of death and early struggles and childhood memories, turned Garfield's thoughts powerfully toward his family during the following months. Things which he had been taking for granted, as any child does,—the devotion of his mother, the generosity of his brother,—came strongly home to him, and his letters to them and to his sisters became suffused with a

warmth and glow of gratitude hitherto lacking. On December 7, for instance, he wrote to his mother urging her to make herself comfortable and to let him help with money, and begging her to write. "It does me good to hear from the remnants of our once happy family. I want you both to write often to me." Again on April 2, 1854, he reports having received a letter from Thomas, and adds, "Mother, I can never repay you and him for the kindness and love you have always bestowed upon me."

Under the circumstances the Commencement of 1854 was for him a time of deep feeling. He entered in his journal: "June 23. Almeda and I wrote a colloquy for the Commencement and yesterday the exercises passed off with spirit in the presence of 2500 people. The last link is now broken and I have severed myself from Hiram and tomorrow shall leave its hallowed ground." As a valedictory gift the Board of Trustees voted a small bonus to him and to Miss Booth, who left at the same time to complete a college course at Oberlin. "In view of the faithfulness and service to the institution of James A. Garfield and Almeda A. Booth, we recommend to appropriate to each fifty dollars in addition to their salaries."¹

Next came a farewell visit to his mother at Solon. "She met me in tears," he wrote (June 26), "knowing that soon I was to leave. May God bless that loved Mother and repay her for her kindness to me for I never can." The next day he went with his mother once more to Orange, where they visited the Boyntons near the old home site. "A thousand recollections cling around the old homestead. Why must this spirit of mine yearn forever over ruins and memories of the bygone? . . . visited wrote and thought. Reviewed my strange life and pondered on the Why: Why have I thus been spared? God only knows. May I obey his precepts . . . and let His will lead on and mark the pathway of my chequered life."

On June 29 he started on his eastward journey and closed the formative part of his adolescence. He was in age a man—twenty-two years—and had impressed his teachers, fellow

¹ Hinsdale, *President Garfield and Education*, p. 38.

students and pupils as a person of marked gifts. He was already successful as a Disciple preacher. He was a strong debater, as the subject was developed at Hiram, and socially he was a friendly, companionable, rather expansive person, given to strong moods but lovable and attractive in spite of mannerisms. He created above all an impression of power, intellectually and personally. "He was strong-framed, deep-chested, six feet high, with a blue eye, and a massive head surmounted by a shock of tow-colored hair. Physically he was the Garfield of twenty years later, only he had the pulpy adolescence of twenty. Time had not yet rounded out his figure, browned and thinned his hair, and put into his face the lines of thought."¹ Fuller, in his reminiscences (p. 31), uses almost the same words but adds, "There was a genial, kindly look in his eyes which every one felt who came in contact with him, yet a certain dignity which would command respect."

The years from 1850 to 1854 had transformed the boy into the man, but there can be no doubt that the extreme religious concentration that had dominated him had done much to thwart natural lines of development, cutting him off from all thought on political or public questions, directing his literary aspirations along the lines of rhapsodizing and sermonizing, making him abnormally self-conscious in his ideas of self-culture and growth as well as altogether too censorious toward all unfamiliar religious and social manifestations. Whether, if he had remained at Hiram, he would soon have attained to the catholicity and breadth of outlook which in his later life distinguished him from most men, or whether he would have entered public life as he did, may be doubted. It was a wise decision on his part that led him, in July, 1854, to turn his face eastward and seek what he could not find among the Disciples at Hiram, a broader and a deeper culture under New England skies.

¹ Hinsdale, *President Garfield and Education*, p. 24.

CHAPTER III

AT WILLIAMS COLLEGE UNDER MARK HOPKINS

1854-1856

THE two years which Garfield spent at Williams College were destined to have a profound effect upon his intellectual habits, due largely to the stimulus he received from the teaching of one man, Mark Hopkins. At the same time they materially altered his views upon things social and religious so that, when he returned to Ohio to resume the old life at Hiram, he found that his whole outlook had been changed. It is well, then, to pause before beginning the narrative to observe the characteristics of this typical New England institution in the middle of the nineteenth century.

Williams College, standing in the extreme northwest corner of Massachusetts, was founded in the late eighteenth century and had grown by 1854 to be a school of some two hundred and fifty students, drawn from the immediate neighborhood for the most part, but containing not a few from more distant cities. Under the presidency of Mark Hopkins, since 1836, it had a reputation for thorough scholarship and religious orthodoxy of the New England Calvinist type, resting on firmly established traditions of settled, respectable, conventional life. Although situated in a country village, it was not too far from railways at North Adams or Hoosick to be out of touch with the foremost social and ecclesiastical elements in New York, Boston, Springfield and other cities. Intellectually it was of the world, the educated religious world of the eastern seaboard states. No sharper contrast could be found than the contrast of this college and community with the simplicity, rusticity and newness of Hiram and the Eclectic.

When young Garfield went to Williams it was for him the entrance into a society of settled conventions, a society which

knew and cared nothing for the religious and social customs among which he had grown up, and would accept him only in so far as he adapted himself to its usages. Instead of the cheerful, emotional habits of the Disciples he encountered the concentrated strength of conservative New England Calvinism. The community and the college were first and foremost orthodox, socially and officially. Although the world was on the eve of the tremendous scientific and economic revolutions which swept away the possibility of continuance in the old New England traditions, the customs which reigned at Williams in 1854-1856 were little changed from the days of the Pilgrim fathers. Chapel twice a day in the Griffin Hall room, Sabbath service in the Congregational church at the head of the Main Street, morning and afternoon,—these were the accepted requirements. But in addition prayer meetings were a firmly established custom. There were class prayer meetings. There were spontaneous prayer meetings on Sundays. Still further there were noon prayer meetings on four days of the week, conducted in two of the halls,—in East College by Professor Albert Hopkins; in West College by Professor Perry. In these exercises, wholly voluntary, over one-half of the students participated, many of them with much regularity. Now and then revivals took place, usually fostered and directed by Albert Hopkins, one such occurring in the very first winter of Garfield's attendance. All this was bound to test his capacity for learning, for adaptation and for profiting under difficult circumstances. With his profound religious prejudices and radical nonresistant political views, it might have been expected that his experiences would be painful, if not stormy, and the outcome a doubtful one. That things turned out as they did was a strong proof of the common sense and self-control which lay beneath the religious censoriousness and social sentimentalism of his last term at the Eclectic.

Almost as important, although quite different in kind, was the test Garfield underwent in entering from the social simplicities of Hiram the active undergraduate life of a men's college among the New England hills. It was high time that the young man should descend from the heights of inflated

rhetoric and religious commonplace, among a group of admiring "brothers and sisters," and live a normal masculine life among a group of rollicking and noisy students, much given to horseplay and nonsense in the intervals of their work. Williams College was the place in which to do this, for neither among faculty nor students did anything like his extreme sentimentalism exist, but rather a hard-headed Yankee practicality, coupled with a respect for achievements instead of soaring flights of rhetoric. How Garfield met this test will presently be shown.

The spirit in which he made the journey to Williams can best be illustrated by a few quotations from letters or journals which give some idea of his emotional exaltation. First on the Lake Erie steamer from Cleveland to Buffalo, when "the murmuring cadence of the deep had swelled into the storm's pealing anthem," he "stood entranced and gazed with awe-struck admiration on this sublime display of the midnight glories of Him who holds the floods in the hollow of His Hand." The next morning, as the steamer approached Buffalo, he noticed that "the winds had spent their rage and the billows were heaving gently like the bosom of a sleeping infant." When he left Albany on the night boat for New York, he soared into imaginative ecstasy: "We stood upon the upper deck and drank in the gorgeous loveliness of the scene. The castle-crowned heights that skirt the shore reflected their deepening shadows in the waters below and the cool air of evening, laden with odors of richness rendered the whole a scene of surpassing loveliness."

At every point in his journey problems of religious or social propriety presented themselves to the young purist. While visiting his friend, Corydon Fuller, at Butler, New York, he was unable to approve the Reverend Antoinette Brown, whom he heard preach. Admitting that she had "a dignified and commanding though modest appearance," he still wrote: "I could never think of the female speaker as the gentle sister, the tender wife or the loving mother. . . . The sacred place which Woman holds in my affections would be desecrated by the superaddition of public life." At New York after seeing the sights he wrote, "I also witnessed the

enactment of a Temperance Drama and laid the foundation in my mind for the examination of the question whether dramatic composition and scenic representations are in accordance with the spirit of an enlightened Christian morality."

When, on July 10, he finally went up the Hudson and thence by train to Hoosick and by stage, seventeen miles, to Williamstown, his enthusiasm reached its height. It was a journey to the home of culture, a very Olympus of inspiration. Of the final approach to the college he wrote this ecstatic description. "July 11. We pass through a gorge between the towering peaks, which suddenly expands into a delightful valley for a mile or two and then contracts again. In the center of this valley, like a diamond in an emerald casket, is Williamstown. This beautiful little village is literally walled with mountains, a wall not of 'ruined parapets and crumbling towers' but God's own wall of granite, the everlasting hills, clothed with the richness of His verdure and wreathed with the gorgeous clouds of His own skies. Beauty and Sublimity are enthroned upon these hills and gladness and joy dwell in the valley. Fit place this seems, to give the mind to thought and contemplation of the works of God and the truths of science. May it be unto me while I sojourn here like Lebanon and the Mountains that are round about Jerusalem."

In the same vein of swelling sentiment he described the place to Miss Rudolph a few days later. "This is a quiet little village," he wrote (July 15), "nestling in the lap of the Green Mountains and on all sides like huge sentinels stand the towering peaks that prop the bending heavens with their woodcrowned heads and now, this quiet afternoon, after a refreshing shower these tall mountains, wearing a girdle of shining clouds, loom grandly up and swell the soul that gazes on them. . . . The College and its officers bear the marks of stern New England strength and the surrounding country reminds one of the classical antiquities of castelated Europe." Probably no one but a romantic-souled youth from a perfectly flat region like Portage County, Ohio, would have seen in the smoothly rounded and gently swelling

Berkshire Hills, sparsely dotted with farm clearings, anything so grandiose or so European.

The first steps in his readjustment came when he presented himself before the president for examination, and found definitely that he was not sufficiently advanced in his studies to graduate in less than two years. He recorded his impression in the journal. "I went soon to the house of the President," he wrote, "and made known my errand. His appearance is satisfying to me and he makes me feel at home with him. He looks like a noble specimen of a man." He was then examined in mathematics by Professor Tatlock, "a plain, blunt man," in Greek by Professor Griffin, "a nervous and active man," and in Latin by Professor Lincoln, who while evidently "strong and vigorous" had "something of the self-sufficient, not to say over-bearing in his appearance. I was entered as a Junior for the coming year," he concluded, "and thus have taken two years of labor on my shoulders."

Garfield had not realized that the Williams fall term opened a month later than the Eclectic's so he found himself actually present during the closing weeks of the summer term, with a month's vacation to follow that. Determined to waste no time he joined in with some of the sophomores and worked privately to bring up his mathematics, studying meanwhile with the keenest interest his new associates and sending back his impressions. "I am pleased, *very well pleased* with the College and the Professors," he wrote to Miss Rudolph (July 30), "and am very glad I determined to come here instead of Bethany. . . . I do not feel satisfied merely to carry away the skin of a Massachusetts sheep but I want to know something of the men, the *thoughts* that are here. I feel the necessity of breaking the shell of local notions and getting mentally free. I mean no disrespect for the influences and teaching that I have had, but I mean to say that to mould one's mind in one place and under one system of things must necessarily give it one particular channel and not that breadth of field that is desirable."

To Fuller (July 30) he confided the restless ambition that burned within: "I am reconnoitering the ground. There is a high standard of scholarship here and very many excellent

scholars, those that have had far better advantages and more thorough training than I have. I have been endeavoring to calculate their dimensions and power and, between you and me, I have determined that out of the forty-two members of my class thirty-seven shall stand behind me within two months. . . . I lie here alone on my bed at midnight, tossing restlessly while my nerves and sinews crawl and creep and I almost feel that there are but two courses before me, to stand at least *among* the first or die. I believe I can do it, if granted a fair trial."

To his general enthusiasm over scenery, students and professors there was, of course, one marked exception—in the field of religion. It was not to be expected that the follower of Alexander Campbell could approve of the ways of New England orthodoxy. President Mark Hopkins he was forced to admire. On hearing him preach, July 17, he entered this judgment in his journal: "First and most important he impresses me with the idea that every word comes from his heart up through his understanding and I *feel* that he is a good man. He certainly is a great thinker though I should not say a very original one. There is a symmetry about his mind that is admirable. His manner and gestures are peculiarly his own, and though they look well in him, yet they would be awkward for most men. On the whole I think he is a great man." There his approval stopped. The next Sunday he wrote to Miss Rudolph: "I have listened to two long essays (sermons) read by two 'reverend' gentlemen today and feel nearly exhausted by the effort. I see I am doomed to two hours of misery weekly while I stay here." Two weeks later one of the leading clergymen of New York City fared no better. "I have listened to the great Dr. G. W. Bethune, the lion of the clergy of N. Y. and Brooklyn. Although he really is a great and eloquent man, he evidently looks at the gospel through the colored spectacles of a shackled and purblind theology and would be but an infant on that theme by the side of our dear Bro. Campbell." (August 13.)

To his mother he complained of the excessively high cost of living, "Board, room, washing and all cost me \$3.00 per week now," but he hoped after joining a club to reduce this

by one-half. Another drawback in his eyes, accustomed to co-education, was the presence of his own sex exclusively. "I have the best of board," he wrote to Fuller (July 30) "... but the boarders happen to be about the roughest in college. I tell you what, this one-legged system of education is attended with many evils. The absence of females from table and society takes away a very wholesome restraint and leaves roughness in its stead." A few days later (August 2) he sent to his mother some reflections on Williamstown society. "I have not seen many of the inhabitants yet, but they seem very much like Ohio folks for you know that most of the Western Reserve was settled by people from New York or New England. In general I think they live in higher style and are wealthier than the masses in Ohio. We often have fresh clams or oysters for dinner and this morning we had a wood-pecker pot-pie. Wouldn't you like a piece? We have all kinds of berries and sauce. The mountains are covered with whortle-berries &c."

During the last weeks of this term, while Garfield was taking the measure of his associates and observing his teachers and his surroundings, he incurred what appears to have been an attack of the modern influenza. His letters home complain of constant headache, and "taking more and more cold" until finally he went to bed with what he called "brain fever." Probably his furious overdriving in study aided in causing his symptoms, for in addition to his review work he recorded that he read many volumes of miscellaneous literature, including Byron's *Childe Harold*, "a most sublime poem (with qualifications) and Bro. Campbell's writings."

After some painful days he recovered in time to witness the festivities of the annual Commencement season. The importance and elaboration of the series of observances, far beyond anything at the exhibitions of the Eclectic, deeply impressed the Ohio youth. "The last two days," he wrote to Fuller (August 22), "have been a succession of Addresses, Orations and Exhibitions and last Wednesday was the Commencement. . . . Among all their meetings I attended one that was especially interesting to me, the meeting of the Alumni. I never saw so large an assembly of hale old men.

They looked noble and patriarchal; there were many of them that graduated 30, 40 and 50 years ago and now these hoary-headed class-mates were met and walking arm-in-arm over the old College grounds and counting their scars received in the great battle of life. Among them were Gov. Washburn, present Gov. of Mass.; Ex-Gov. Briggs and a score of judges, editors and preachers of distinguished notoriety. On Tuesday I listened to an address from Ralph Waldo Emerson of Boston and I must say he is the most startlingly original thinker I ever heard. The bolt which he hurls against error, like Goethe's cannon-ball goes 'fearful and straight shattering that it may reach and shattering what it reaches.' I could not sleep that night after hearing his thunderstorm of eloquent thoughts. It made *me* feel so small and insignificant to hear *him*." The address that Emerson gave on this occasion has not been published, but the fragment of it in the *Memoir of R. W. Emerson*, by J. E. Cabot (Vol. II, p. 757), shows that Garfield encountered in it a mode of thought immeasurably more subtle and daring than the sort of thing prevalent at Hiram or in Disciple circles, and a style of utterance as close-packed and definite as his own had been loose and turgid. According to one writer it not only kept him from sleeping the following night but marked an epoch in his existence. "He told me," wrote Edward Atkinson, "that he dated his intellectual life from listening to a lecture by Ralph Waldo Emerson, given in the old parish church in Williamstown . . . of which lecture all that he could remember was that Emerson said: 'Mankind is as lazy as it dares to be.'"¹

College opened for the fall term on September 14 and Garfield began his career as a Williams junior, rooming in number 16, South College, with his old Hiram friend, C. D. Wilber. "I have moved into the college building," he wrote his mother (September 30), "and have a fine place. I have a nicely papered room, 16 by 12 with two bedrooms and two closets belonging to it. . . . I am in the second story and just at each of the two windows in my large room there stands a large maple tree." On September 28 he described to

¹ *The Industrial Progress of the Nation*, p. 11.

Miss Rudolph his daily schedule: "Rise and attend prayers in the chapel at 5 and then recite one hour in Quintilian. Then go a quarter of a mile to breakfast. At 9 o'clock, three times a week attend lectures on Philosophy and at 11 recite in Mechanics. At 4 p.m. Greek for an hour, then prayers. In addition to these there [are] occasional exercises in themes, debates and orations."

There is little comment by Garfield on these studies or on his teachers during the year. It may be inferred that they satisfied him, in so far as they gave him thorough instruction in more advanced fields than any he had hitherto entered. There was evidently nothing new about their methods or outlook, but he saw nothing in that to criticise. The aim was to make a perfect recitation on a memorized text. Fuller paid his friend a visit in October, attended classes and heard him recite in Greek. "James did first rate," he wrote in his journal, "and I have just been conversing with one of the class who says that he will take one of the first honors. . . . He is ambitious but his ambition is good and generous and one which would scorn to build on the wreck of a rival's hopes."¹ In the second term Garfield was absent at the start, but suffered no inconvenience from it. "When I returned to college," he reported to Fuller (March 13), "there was the accumulated labor of three weeks to be brought up . . . and so till this time I have used the days and a large share of the nights in getting my work up even. . . . I have, however, had no trouble at all, and I have never stumbled before the professors since you were here. Our work for this term is Political Economy, Astronomy, Evidences of Christianity & Latin."² With one of his professors, A. L. Perry, who taught him political economy, he later became very friendly, and public finance was the main subject of interest for him during most of his later life, yet so far was he from anticipating any such a future that he did not again refer to the subject nor did he even once mention the professor's name. His interests were still overwhelmingly literary.

In the spring he developed a great enthusiasm for Ger-

¹ Fuller, *Reminiscences of J. A. Garfield*, p. 163.

² *Ibid.*, p. 181.

man. Writing to Miss Rudolph (April 7), he said: "I have not read all of Mrs. Stowe's 'Sunny memories' but I very much like what I have read of it. Anything that loves Germany, I love. If there is any place beyond the sea I would love to visit more than another it would be Germany. You don't know how much I want to study a year at Göttingen. Do you think of studying German? I hope before I leave College here to have a tolerable knowledge of that sweet tongue, the language of the heart, the repository of such sweet soul-stirring thoughts. I have already made some advancement in it and intend to keep it up." His letters show that German was taken with a rush, the class plunging into Schiller a few weeks after beginning grammar. "Shall I tell you the labor incumbent on me for today?" he wrote to Miss Rudolph (June 18). "Well, first a recitation in Ollendorf and the German reader; then a lesson in Optics, a lecture to attend in Chemistry, 20 pages of 'Don Carlos' and finally a recitation in Chemistry." About the same time he wrote to his cousin, Phebe Boynton (June 7): "We have been ten days in calculating an eclipse of the moon and have just completed the work. Yesterday I recited 23 pages of German poetry. There is room enough here for all the labor any man can perform."

On the other hand, he took little interest in chemistry. Sixteen years later, in his journal for 1872, he complained of the difficulties he found in a law case where he was counsel. "It bristles with chemistry," he said, "at every point, and I now feel how fatal a thing it is for a man to neglect any branch of his college course. Chemistry is the only study in the course that I disliked and although I passed fairly well I did not study it with the love for it that I had for other studies. I must atone for it by working it up again." Other sciences he found interesting. He wrote to Miss Rudolph in the autumn (October 28): "We are now having lectures and experiments of a very interesting character, each of which, furnishes enough thought for a whole week. These old Professors have spent their whole lives in arranging and analyzing great truths of Science. O how I wish you could hear them. Their teachings give one such grand

view of nature and all things around us." These lectures were in physics and in geology, as his notebooks show.

Perhaps the most striking fact about Garfield's attitude toward his work at Williams is that he made no comment at all upon the prescribed literary and rhetorical exercises. One wonders whether he encountered any criticism, any influence tending toward modification of his figurative exuberance and turgidity. The subjects of his essays would indicate that he was allowed to choose his own field and that he continued to range in the realm of literary generalities—"Utility and Beauty," "Chivalry," "Democracy," and the like. Of the tremendous political and economic problems with which the United States was boiling in those very years not a breath disturbed the secluded calm of the Williams teaching. All was abstract, "elegant," classical, philosophical.

For the chief benefit Garfield derived from this first year at Williams one must turn wholly away from the studies to the strenuous initiation he underwent in college life and activities. Here he encountered something which for the first time in his life really put him on his mettle and compelled him to contend for success, in a community of active young men with no admiring "Sisters" or "Soul-Brothers" to form a complacent background. Undergraduate rivalry in those days, long before organized athletics, found its outlet in hazing and horseplay on one side, and in oratory, debating and college politics on another. With the former, Garfield does not seem to have had any connection, although there is a vague tradition of his being injured in a class rush. The class of 1856, which he had joined, had had "an ill reputation for lawless conduct" in its first years, according to the historian of Williams College. While there is no sign of that in Garfield's letters, it seems to have been split into antagonistic factions whose field of combat lay in literary societies and secret fraternities.

Garfield went into this undergraduate life with the same ambition to succeed that he showed in his studies. At an early day he scrutinized the oratorical powers of his colleagues. "I have visited one of two literary societies," he wrote to Fuller (July 30), "and I have as yet heard no one

that I should fear to stand before. They have splendid halls and each of the two have a library of 4000 volumes. . . . I think I can stand pretty well in that respect.”¹ Shortly after college opened he joined the Philologist, September 21, presently took part in a debate and then delivered an oration. He reported to Fuller (November 12): “I have got fully afloat in the literary department. Two weeks ago I delivered an oration on Chivalry and when the meeting was dismissed several seniors came to me and wanted me to speak on their side of the debate for next week. So I did and was not altogether sorry. I have never had so good an opportunity to improve in speaking as now. . . . The library furnishes information on almost every subject and a person can prepare himself.”² At the same time Garfield joined a nonsecret society known as the “Equitable Fraternity” with a motto, “Ouden Adelon,” which avowedly aimed to combat the influence of the secret Greek letter societies, at that time numbering six. Elected to membership October 24, he made his first appearance before the body in debate on November 7 on the question: “Resolved that it would be for the interests of Europe and humanity that Russia should subjugate the Ottoman Empire.”³

By the middle of the autumn term Garfield became aware that all was not to be plain sailing in undergraduate affairs. It is the testimony of several of his college mates that, on his first entrance, he had to encounter no inconsiderable prejudice on account of his rustic bringing up and his religious faith. One of his classmates, S. P. Hubbell, later in life wrote:

“Garfield entered our Junior class in the fall of ’54. He brought with him from Ohio another student, Charles D. Wilbur, . . . and between them there seemed to be a strong attachment. . . . Wilbur unfortunately was lame and limped badly and required the help of crutches or a stout cane. They were always together and Garfield’s kindness to his crippled chum was noticeable. The pair in their daily

¹ Fuller, *Reminiscences of J. A. Garfield*, p. 132.

² *Ibid.*, p. 170.

³ MS. records of Society.

walks to and from the recitation rooms and about the college grounds excited the eager gaze and curiosity of their fellow-students, from their quaint and odd appearance and evident unfamiliarity with college ways and doings. Besides the contrast in the appearance of the couple was very striking—Garfield of large frame, looming up six feet high, strong and healthy, looking like a backwoodsman, and Wilbur, with a pale intellectual cast of countenance limping along beside him.

“They made no attempt to conform to the ways and peculiarities of college life or to ingratiate themselves with the students. They both seemed to be in dead earnest, striving to get an education, and to be entirely engrossed in their studies and college duties. Their position at first was a very isolated and peculiar one, and which was enhanced by a whisper that soon circulated among the students that they were *Campbellites*. Now what that meant, or what tenets the sect held, nobody seemed to know, but it was supposed to mean something very awful. But they continued on pursuing the even tenor of their way, unmoved by the stares and criticisms of their companions.”¹

In the Philologian meetings Garfield became aware of an unfriendly spirit, which he described to Fuller (December 14): “Shortly after I commenced to speak on debate there were several seniors that manifested a great degree of uneasiness and one especially by the name of Edwards took occasion to get up next after me every time I spoke and try to make out something cunning against what I had said. His desire to hit me off became so manifest that several of my class mentioned it and said that he ought to be put through a course.” Garfield watched for a good opportunity and when it came he utilized it with deadly effect. “A few evenings since,” he wrote to Fuller (December 14), “I was appointed to write a censor and by virtue of office you know I was allowed to say what I pleased. I wrote about 30 stanzas and devoted five of them to Edwards’ particular case, the last of which ran as follows:

¹ Bundy, *Life of Gen. J. A. Garfield*, p. 37.

A hollow head for hollow sounds,
Great length of tongue for yelping hounds,
A lusty calf to bawl;
A vaunting pugilist to brag,
A grinning monkey for a wag
But Edwards for them all.

The effect was salutary and the tide seemed to be turned. I apprehend no further trouble from him."¹

This successful counterattack undoubtedly revealed the rustic westerner as a man who could abundantly take care of himself in a verbal contest. But the episode, and possibly other revelations of a superior attitude on the part of his college mates, produced in Garfield a disillusionment which showed itself in several letters written after the end of the term, while he was earning a little money by teaching a class in penmanship at North Pownal, a small Vermont village on the stage line to the west.

To a Hiram friend, Miss Fiske, he wrote emphatically (December 31): "I have been here long enough to be initiated into the duties and mysteries of college life. Though there are a great many fine scholars and brilliant minds here, yet there are but few who seem to have any correct views of life and its aims and objects. If I gain nothing else by the course, I shall at least rid myself of that reverential awe which I have been accustomed to feel toward a man with more sheepskin than sense. I have had a fine chance to see the workings and hear the doctrines of New England orthodoxy and I am more convinced than ever of the fact that the reformation pleaded by Bro. A. Campbell is the brightest light of the age. The people here look some ways down on Western men and institutions; but I say that if New England has any boasting to do, she must do it quickly or it will be forever too late."

This ebullition of dissatisfaction seems to have been short-lived, for there are no further remarks of this kind during the year, or in fact during the whole course. It is also noteworthy that, while he remained as zealous a Disciple as ever,

¹ Fuller, *Reminiscences of J. A. Garfield*, p. 173.

he began to write with greater respect of New England religious habits. The first thing to impress him was the New England Thanksgiving, which he described to Miss Rudolph (November 30): "It is a bitter cold day without and the winter winds howl like demons. The valley is barren and bare and the mountain tops are shrouded with a garment of snow. But New England's heart is warm within and thousands of homes are made glad by the return of children who gather around the old familiar hearth-stones of their childhood homes and thousands of pious hearts are today going up in thankfulness to God for the mercies of the past year. This is a good old custom in New England of observing this day of public thanksgiving and festivity."

In the winter term he actually took part in a revival. "They are having a great 'Revival,'" he wrote to Miss Rudolph (March 5, 1855), "and though I cannot subscribe to all the *ways* and *means* yet I believe there is much good being done and I can truly say that I have never been among more spiritually-minded Christians than those I find in Williams College. I am heartily cooperating with them in arousing the unconcerned to the interests of the Christian religion, but I let them have their way in reference to doctrine. I do not think it would be right to interpose a discordant element at such a time though I can hardly resist my desire to tell them what the Gospel is."

In such a spirit Garfield joined in the organized religious life of the College. "Garfield," wrote S. P. Hubbell, a classmate,¹ "early joined the Mills Theological Society, which represented some of the best men in college. They held meetings every week, had a very fine library and embraced among their numbers a great deal of the best culture and talent in the College." An allusion in a letter of Garfield to his cousin, Phebe Boynton, shows that he stood up manfully for his beliefs in this body. "I must stop writing," he said (July, 1855), "and prepare to discuss baptism this evening in the Theological Society with about forty young Congregational Preachers." In spite of his sturdy adherence to the doctrines of Campbell, he won the respect of his Calvinistic associates.

¹ Bundy, *Life of Gen. J. A. Garfield*, p. 39.

"Garfield successively filled the offices of Librarian and President of the society," continued Hubbell, "and by his urbanity, innate kindliness of nature, and good sound judgment in the management of its affairs, won the respect and esteem of all its members. . . . He lived the life of a true Christian."

By the spring of his first year Garfield found himself forging to the front as a leader of the nonfraternity element in the class. He had debated and uttered orations, he had taken part in evangelizing, he had impressed his mates in the classroom and now college honors began to come his way. In May, 1855, he was elected one of the editors of the *Williams Quarterly* for the coming year and assumed office at once. This periodical was a thoroughly serious literary monthly, for while its editorial and miscellaneous matter related to college news and problems, its formal articles aimed at the very highest. The board from the class of 1856 comprised three fraternity men, H. E. Knox (Sigma Phi); J. Tatlock (Kappa Alpha) and W. R. Baxter (Delta Psi), while Garfield and E. C. Smith represented the Oudens. Garfield had charge of getting out the summer number and found his hands full.

A still more emphatic recognition of his place came toward the end of the term as described in an exulting letter to Fuller. "You remember the Logian election. There has been great excitement among the aspirants for office within the last three weeks and a strong Secret-Society coalition was formed to run in their own men to the offices and there is always a great strife for the first Presidency [*i.e.*, presidency during the first term]. Last Wednesday evening, much to the chagrin of that clique I was elected to the first Presidency for the coming year by a vote of 46 to 30."

At a later time Wilber said this of his first year at Williams: "We found we were in a focus of not unfriendly but unrelenting criticism. If we could not stand the test we could not pass. So Garfield had to meet this test; and . . . in six months, although the criticism was formidable, he had broken down all the college walls so completely that, though every class seemed to be bound by its traditions and its

peculiar style of selfishness, all seemed to be laid low and he was one with the college and the hero of all. . . . He never chose or sought for a college honor in his life: they all came to him from his fellows without his solicitation."¹

The Commencement season found him staying grimly to the end, although Wilber, his roommate, left early. "I never believe," he wrote to Miss Rudolph (July 22), "in giving up till I accomplish that where unto I set out. Nothing but sickness or the death of friends would take me to Ohio before the duties of the year were done, however much I may wish to be there." August 11, in apologizing for a long silence, he wrote: "I have been at work on the *Quarterly*, and the examinations, and the latter were finished last evening and the *Quarterly*—my literary first-born—will be out this afternoon." Then, replying to a suggestion from her that he earn some money by teaching in Ohio before returning, he said: "My duties here are many more than merely those that the College requires and I don't think it would be best for me to be away in the beginning of Senior year. I shall be saying no more than the truth when I say that I have a third more work laid upon me than any other student has, especially for this and the coming term." To Fuller he said: "I read the proof sheets of the first 48 pages myself and there are but very few typographical errors. . . . I had nine-tenths of all the labor of criticising proof, keeping the books and carrying on the correspondence."²

The college periodical deserves some notice since it represents the mental outlook of a college community that has become practically extinct. To begin with, it aimed high, modeling itself upon the serious English and American reviews. Its contributions, in imitation of the English practice, were unsigned, and they were one and all literary. Even those that dealt with scientific subjects or college matters were written with the same earnest effort to be eloquent, elevated, allusive, figurative. The number that Garfield prepared in the summer of 1855 had no less than nineteen prose contributions, nearly all in essay form and purely general

¹ Hinsdale, *President Garfield and Education*, p. 141.

² Fuller, *Reminiscences of J. A. Garfield*, p. 203.

in character—"The Mission of Beauty," "Province of Fictitious Literature," "The Immateriality of Mind," "A Vision of Life," or, in lighter vein, "The Bogus Coin," "Rough It," "A Letter from Quis." J. J. Ingalls, later famous for his scorching eloquence as United States Senator from Kansas, contributed a savage skit on college snobs under the title, "A Brace of College Characters"; C. F. Gilson, one of the teaching force, had a light essay "Why do we shave?" as well as a translation from the German. Professor Chadbourne furnished the second installment of "Wanderings in Newfoundland." Only once in all these essays was there any allusion to politics; for the most part they were entirely literary. It is as strongly literary an attitude toward life as that which Garfield had while at Hiram, although much less sentimental. The poetry ran along the same lines—"The Tolling of a Bell at Sunrise," "A July Night," "Threnodia" on a dead student.

Garfield's own contributions were an essay, a poem, and an "Editor's Table." The poem, "Sam," was a rhymed attack on the Know-Nothings, and, with another poem, "The Bondman's Dream," furnished the only element of antislavery feeling in the whole issue. From the editorial one gathers Garfield's ideal of self-directed rather than compulsory scholarship. "All American Colleges," he wrote (p. 89), "are confessedly based upon the compulsory system; and without stopping to notice the arguments for or against that system . . . it will, I think, be admitted that in no department of Education is there more need of voluntary labor than in . . . the Literary Department. It is indeed an uninviting task to bubble up sentiment, and elaborate thought in obedience to corporate laws; and not unfrequently these children of the brain, when paraded before the proper authorities show by their meager proportions, that they have not been nourished by the genial warmth of a willing heart. There was then a manifest need of something which should *call* out rather than *drive* out the literary life in college; and for this purpose the *QUARTERLY* was established."

The first article, by Garfield, bearing the somewhat

affected title of "The Geology of Literature," dealt in reality with the conception of the evolution of literature as the thought of humanity, including under that heading all philosophy, history and science. The last sentence may serve to illustrate how far Garfield still was, at the end of his junior year, from appreciating that the literary point of view was not the sole one. "He who would understand the real spirit of Literature, should not select the authors of any one period alone, but rather go to the fountain head and trace the little rill as it courses along down the ages, broadening and deepening into the great ocean of thought which the men of the present are exploring."

The Commencement of 1855 must have been an interesting one, for, in addition to the usual list of undergraduate orations and ecclesiastical addresses and the thirty-two Commencement parts, no less a personage than Henry Ward Beecher delivered the annual oration before the literary societies. But the only reference to the occasion by Garfield is one where he speaks of the return of the alumni. "Hundreds of old graduates were back to behold again the scenery around old Williams and old men who graduated 40 years ago were seen walking arm in arm among the classic bowers or in the shade of the granite mountains."¹ He was mainly concerned, apparently, with the preparation of the September issue of the *Quarterly* and when that was safely put in shape he left for the West. Garfield might well feel content when he started for Ohio. In one academic year he had stepped to the very front in studies, in undergraduate life as orator, debater, literary light, college politician, leader of the Oudens against secret societies—a typical prominent undergraduate of the time.

When Garfield returned from the short summer vacation he made a change in his rooming arrangements which he described to Miss Rudolph: "Charles [Wilber] has the magnetic observatory, a little octagonal building in the grove and I have a room in East College, Number 23, with the Theological Library of 1600 volumes attached to it." His duties were scarcely onerous, his attendance as librarian

¹ Fuller, *Reminiscences of J. A. Garfield*, p. 204.

being confined to Saturdays at 1 p.m. "My situation is extremely pleasant," he remarked; "I think I shall be much better satisfied to live alone where I can commune with myself more than I have heretofore been able to do."

But Garfield probably had little or no time for communing with himself, for no sooner had he arrived than he plunged again into all sorts of student activities which kept him in a constant rush. To begin with, as president of the Philologian Society he had to organize debates, arrange programs and preside over meetings. In October he took a journey on society business to New York, for the purpose of purchasing books for the library, and he had hardly returned from this when something resembling an intercollegiate event took place. "Nov. 2, 1855 On the 16th of October my class went over the mountains 30 miles to meet the senior class of Amherst College. There they, in company with the President (Dr. Stearns) and ex-Pres. Hitchcock of geological memory, christened a mountain with appropriate literary ceremonies and after this was done they treated the Williams boys to a grand dinner at the best hotel in Shelburne Falls. Three of our men were chosen before we left Williamstown to respond to three toasts that were to be given; one to our class, one to the Quarterly, and one to the Literary Societies. To the last I responded." The account of the episode in the *Quarterly* shows that the class tramped on foot over the Hoosac range to Charlemont, scrambling directly down the steep eastern slope in order to inspect the tunneling operation already begun. Without doubt, this display of the comparative oratorical powers of the two classes stirred some of the same emotions that in later years a football or baseball game would evoke. It was friendly rivalry in the one line where undergraduates of those days really competed.

Meanwhile the Equitable Fraternity, under Garfield's impulse, had appointed a committee to "report a plan of literary exercises less similar to the usual exercises of the other societies" and Garfield took an active part in debating, drafting, amending and finally in carrying into effect a scheme calling for essays, reviews and reports in addition to

the customary debates and orations. Explaining (March 6) to Miss Rudolph why he had not written, he gave a catalogue of his doings which showed that he was one of the committee on arrangements of the Amherst senior dinner, that he caught a severe cold on the trip, laying him up for four days, and that the moment he was able to get up he had to work to prepare for a public debate on October 24. "I then had a sudden call to go to Pittstown, N. Y. to speak [to Disciples] and that took two days more. After my return every moment was occupied until last evening preparing my exaugural Address on retiring from the Presidency of the Philologian Society. My opposing candidate and his supporters, smarting under their defeat by a '*novus homo*' like myself, made a body of not very generous critics and I felt like doing something tolerably decent in their presence last evening. Now that is past and I breathe freely once more. . . ." He congratulated himself on being able, in writing to her, to take refuge from "this interminable rush, this whirl of excitement."

Garfield had, of course, to continue his labors on the editorial board of the *Quarterly*, whose next issue, coming out in December, 1855, showed him still wooing the humorous muse, for his only signed contribution was a mock-heroic poem entitled "The Charge of the Tight Brigade" and portraying a typical interclass joke, consisting of freshmen putting "ipecac" in a bowl of lemonade and permitting the same to be captured almost without resistance by sophomores, whose enjoyment of their triumph, under the circumstances, was but brief. The theme and the treatment were on a level and while in no way inferior to the average undergraduate standards, they are such that no one is tempted to regret Garfield's abandonment of the field of college humorist.

By this time he was perfectly conscious of his position among the students and confided to Fuller: "I may be allowed to say to you what I do not say to many—that my standing and influence here are all that I could wish and, notwithstanding the prejudice against western men, still I can make no complaint of the respect shown to me by the

New Englanders." (November 3.) At the same time, he began to realize that his undergraduate activities were being overdone and he wrote in his journal a few days later (November 8), the following resolution: "It is now ample time for a reform in some of my social . . . habits. I have allowed myself by degrees and almost imperceptibly to be drawn into the current of College partizanship and have thus made myself a sort of College statesman. This has been well enough for the externals of my life, but has it been well enough for me—my inner self and inner life? . . . I now record here my protest against the farther continuation of this state of things and also my resolution to do more for and by myself."

There remained one more undergraduate upheaval for Garfield before he could carry out his plan of ceasing to be a "college statesman" and devoting himself to metaphysics and literature. He described it to Fuller (November 28): "There are six secret societies in College and the Anti-Secret Society to which I belong has been making some exertions to counteract their evil influence. They became very indignant and challenged us to a discussion. They chose three champions and our Society three. The principal labor of the discussion comes upon me and, as the speeches are to be written out in full and published in book form, I am desirous of doing the thing as well as I can. I told them since they gave the challenge we had the right of choosing our weapons so I proposed an oral discussion. They refused and on being pushed for the reasons for their refusal they said they had not as good debaters as we and would prefer to write. So we accepted. I shall visit the Astor library, N. Y. and probably the public library in Boston and make some researches on the general subject of Secrecy and Secret organizations."¹

In the winter vacation he carried out this latter plan and returned loaded with ammunition, but not long after the term opened the proposed debate vanished when, on the eve of the contest, the representatives of the fraternities withdrew entirely from the arrangement. With a final flourish

¹ Fuller, *Reminiscences of J. A. Garfield*, p. 212.

of indignation on the part of the Equitable Fraternity, the whole matter was dropped and with it Garfield seems to have dropped college politics for good.

It is clear that Garfield was recognized as one of the most formidable debaters at Williams, especially by the secret societies, who shrank from encountering him, even on paper. A full description of his forensic powers was given by his classmate, C. H. Hill: "We belonged to the Philologian society, one of the two great literary societies of the college, and it was at his suggestion that I attended its weekly meetings regularly and almost always took part in the debate. I think he was considered our best debater, although we had several who were very good. . . . The great political questions of the day—the treatment of Kansas, the dangers from the influx of foreigners, and from the Roman Catholic Church, the constitutionality of Personal Liberty Bills, the Crimean War, and the desirability of an elective judiciary—were eagerly debated in the Philologian, and he invariably took part, except during the period when he was President of the Society. . . . In all these debates, I should say he was distinguished for moderation—not always perhaps in expression, but in opinion. His instincts were conservative, I remember distinctly that he was, when he came to college, a fervent supporter of an elective judiciary, but in preparing himself to take part in a debate on that subject, he studied himself over to the opposite side of the question, and began his speech by frankly admitting that he had within a week entirely changed his opinions on the subject."¹

Another contemporary, S. G. W. Benjamin,² who saw him as a freshman sees a senior, says: "His talents and force of character made him easily a leader, whatever his age. . . . Garfield's reputation and influence in College, so far as I remember, were chiefly due to forms of ability . . . in line with the successes of his career in after years. Garfield was a clear and forcible rather than an elegant writer of prose and verse, he had a logical mind, a powerful way of presenting an argument to an audience, and remarkable quickness of

¹ Bundy, *Life of Gen. J. A. Garfield*, p. 35.

² *Life and Adventures of a Free Lance*, p. 141.

repartee, humor and sarcasm in debate. His massive figure, commanding, self-confident manner, and magnificent bursts of fiery eloquence, won and held the attention of his audience from the moment he opened his lips. All these qualities were in their prime during his senior year, and I question whether he was ever more eloquent or convincing in Congress than he appeared on the college forum, with the faculty of one of the most critical audiences in America to laugh and applaud. . . . He was undoubtedly one of the greatest natural debaters ever seen at Williams College. No one enjoyed listening to him more than dear old Prex Mark Hopkins, who of course sat on the platform in full view of the audience, his Ciceronian profile clearly outlined against the background. He would sit there doubled up in his armchair with his long thin legs twisted into a knot, and would almost go into convulsions of laughter."

Parallel to this college life and to his studies Garfield found diversion and refreshment in numerous journeys, long or short, from Williamstown as a base. His first excursion was in the summer of 1854, before the opening of college, when he hunted up some Garfield cousins in the town of Monterey, near the southern border of Massachusetts. It was his first introduction to a New England farming community and to the cheerful, companionable but unambitious stock from which his father had sprung and with which, doubtless, he would have been identified had it not been for the Ballou strain in his nature. After returning he described the experience in a letter to his mother (September 30): "One week after the term closed I started and by stage and cars reached Col. Daniel Garfield's about 50 miles from here and within a few miles of the Connecticut line. They were looking for me and seemed much pleased to see me. Daniel is a large, stout, good-natured man and full of fun. He seems very much like the Garfields in Ohio. He took me around over his farm of about 300 acres but oh how stony. He had made preparations for a great fishing excursion . . . so the next day he took his team and we went away to a pond and fished nearly all day. We caught 60 most beautiful perch and pickerel and had a good time. Then Harriet and I took

his horse and carriage and went on a visiting excursion of three days among the Garfields. There are some 20 or 30 families of them and they are fine people. They all claim relationship and old uncle Thomas Garfield sent his love to all the tribe in Ohio."

The Massachusetts Garfields liked their Ohio cousin and he liked them, but they did not become intimate. They were settled Yankee farmers, tilling their stony fields and living content in their village surroundings. He was ambitious for intellectual triumphs and steeped in sentiment. It is doubtful if Thomas, Solomon, Daniel or Elijah Garfield of Monterey, ever thought of the Berkshire hills as "cloud-capped mountains propping the bending heavens," and James Garfield would have nothing less. He visited them once more in the spring vacation of 1855 "to recruit," but after that his interests and affections were drawn in a different direction; he had discovered a little group of Disciples, among whom he found again the sort of religious and social life he had lacked ever since leaving Ohio.

As early as September, 1854, Garfield hunted up a Disciple meeting at West Rupert, Vermont, and wrote to Miss Rudolph reporting his satisfaction. "Bro. Benedict from Newburgh Ohio was the principal speaker, and Bro. M. J. Streator was there. . . . It seems so good to get among our brethren. Oh, how I long to be among them, permanently! We have the truth and our cause must triumph." Next, in the winter vacation, he followed "Bro. Streator" to Poestenkill, a village east of Troy, just where the foothills of the Taconic and Berkshire ranges die away into the Hudson valley. There, to help his host, he took an active part in a series of protracted meetings. "It was a half-month of joy and blessing to me," he wrote to Miss Rudolph. Nor did he return to college empty-handed. In addition to twenty dollars in cash he received all sorts of gifts. "Sister Mary Cole gave me four new shirts, six collars and when I came away stuffed my trunk with cakes and apples. Her sister Mrs Maria Learned also gave me two silk neck handkerchiefs and a satin stock. Another gave me two new pairs of socks. Sister Cole also got me two white linen pocket handkerchiefs."

Next spring, when he again assisted Brother Streator in preaching, "They gave me a pair of pants worth seven dollars," he reported (May 29), "two pair of socks and seventeen dollars in money." So thoroughly did Garfield enjoy the familiar Disciple doings that he went to Poestenkill several times during the college year, even though it involved awkward journeyings on horseback or even on foot. "I cannot resist the appeals of our brethren for aid," he wrote (June 19), "while I have the strength to speak to them. . . . I look upon old New England as a wilderness of dead pines where the winds moan solemnly, and though they play an orthodox tune yet they cannot much longer keep time with the onrushing spirit of free thought, free speech and free Gospel. . . . I long to be in the thickest of the fight and see the army of Truth charge home upon the battalions of heavy-headed Error. But I must be a spy for a time till I have reconnoitred the Enemy's strongholds and then I hope to work."

By the second year he had become deeply attached to one of his benefactors, Mrs. Learned, who claimed him as an adopted son, and presently he struck up an active friendship with Miss Rebecca Sellick, a frequent visitor with the Learned family, letting much of the sentiment pent up at Williamstown flow about these two women, whom he idealized as the rarest of earth's creatures. In the spring vacation of 1856 he divided his time between these two friends, first visiting Miss Sellick at her home in Lewisboro, New York, where he read *Alton Locke* and Tennyson with her, and later going to the Learned's at Poestenkill, where he delivered the customary addresses.

He took journeys of a different type to New York and Boston, nominally in search of material for his Anti-Secret Society debate, but in reality to see the city. A letter of January 5 to Fuller is worth quoting as showing how he thrilled with the impression of a great historic past: "I want to pencil a few lines to you from this enchanting spot (Dorchester Heights) on the sea shore six miles from Boston. I am spending the night here with a class-mate of mine, one of the dearest friends I have in college. I am in an old house,

every timber of oak, built more than a hundred years ago. To one who has seen cities rise from the wild forest in the space of a dozen years and has hardly ever seen a building older than himself, you may be assured that many reflections are awakened by the look of antiquity that everything has about me. The quaint old beams and panelled walls, the heavy double windows that look out oceanward, in short the whole air of the building speaks of the days of the olden time. To think that these walls have echoed to the shouts of loyalty to George the King—have heard all the voices of the spirit-stirring revolution—the patriotic resolves—the tramp of the soldiers' feet,—the voice of the beloved Washington (for within a few rods of here, he made his first revolutionary encampment) the cannon of Bunker Hill, the lamentations of defeat and the shouts of victory—all these cannot but awaken peculiar reflections."

But in writing to Miss Rudolph he did not fail to make such moral reflections as might be expected from the country boy with his background. "My heart is lonely tonight," he said (January 7); "I have been walking along the streets of the thickly peopled city and beholding the forms of suffering and wrecked humanity entering and issuing from the numberless dens of vice and iniquity. I have been gazing also upon the princely marble palaces where dwell the rich and the proud."

It was during Garfield's second year at Williams that numerous signs appeared indicating that his experiences were giving him new thoughts and new appreciations. In November, 1855, for instance, he suddenly abandoned his ideal of nonparticipation in politics and discovered himself to be a good antislavery man. The journal said: "Nov 2, I have just been listening to stump speeches from the Hon. Mr. Goodrich of Stockbridge and Mr. J. H. Patterson of Kansas Territory. The latter gentleman has been outraged and has had his press thrown into the Missouri River and his life threatened for speaking and writing his sentiments in reference to slavery and the election outrage in that territory. . . . I have been instructed tonight on the political condition of our country. . . . At such hours as this I feel

like throwing the whole current of my life into the work of opposing this Giant Evil. I don't know but the religion of Christ demands such action." Such was the radical change from the time when he considered Giddings's cause "carnal" and was glad he was not old enough to vote. The next spring he attended a Fremont ratification meeting and is said to have made his first political speech on that occasion.¹

More important even than political interest was the impression produced upon the young man by the teaching of President Hopkins, whom he had known hitherto only as a preacher. The work of the senior year was peculiarly arranged, in that the class studied anatomy and zoölogy for a time, to learn the physical nature of man, and then plunged into logic and the "elements of Intellectual Philosophy,"—all of this being under the president. The only other study was "the philosophy of Rhetoric," continued throughout the year under John Bascom, a new teacher. For the rest all was concentrated upon philosophical subjects under a man, who, unlike any teacher Garfield had ever encountered, not only tried to see whether he had learned what the textbook said, but endeavored to make him think about the subject studied. This unheard-of novelty produced on the young preacher and would-be poet an almost startling impression.

He wrote in his journal: "Nov. 8. There is a mine opened in the College Chapel twice a day and the treasures are the wealth of President Hopkins' great mind and heart." Two days later he added: "Today and yesterday I have done about what I ought to do in four days. . . . But this mighty Dr. Hopkins is so infinitely suggestive." Not even the fact that they were studying Calvinistic doctrines most abhorrent to a Disciple marred his enthusiasm. "This morning we had a lesson in Vincent on the Catechism and investigated the Doctrine of Purposes and Decrees and Election and Reprobation." On this same day he wrote to Miss Rudolph: "We are revelling in Metaphysics now. I love to flounder in such a sea of strange thoughts. But I never treasured so many jewels of thought in twice the time as I am now doing from our powerful and beloved president, Dr. Hopkins. I am

¹ Bundy, *Life of Gen. J. A. Garfield*, p. 36.

writing almost all he says and will bring it to you when I am done. Today I have written 13 foolscap pages of his thoughts."

Garfield's classmate, J. K. Hazen, a Presbyterian clergyman, in a letter of 1880 refers to these doctrinal debates over the Shorter Catechism. "It was the custom then . . . for the Senior class to devote Saturday morning to an exercise in that time honored standard of the Calvinistic faith, under the instruction of President Hopkins, and though holding a different type of theology, none of our class entered into the study more heartily than Garfield. It suited his metaphysical turn of mind. In the discussions which followed, as we went from our class-room to the dinner-table, I was always impressed with the keenness of his criticisms, though my faith in the Catechism and its doctrines was not shaken, and with the straightforward fairness and hearty respect which he accorded to views which he utterly refused to accept. It occurs to me that in this we have a characteristic feature of the man."¹

The result of this new inspiration was to turn Garfield's interests wholly away from college politics and into philosophical and literary lines during the winter of 1856. His letters show with what delight he followed Dr. Hopkins's teaching. "We are now gathering the ripest fruit of the college course and our beloved and powerful President Hopkins is leading us with a strong hand along paths of thought which my feet have never before trodden. I hope to save some of the treasures he is giving us, to use in coming life." The hurry and contention of the autumn were gone. "I am leading a calm, quiet life of study," he wrote Miss Rudolph (February 11). His letters show that at the same time he plunged into the reading of fiction, chiefly Cooper and Dickens. "When I was thirteen and onward to eighteen," he told Miss Rudolph (March 23, 1855), "I read a great many novels but when I embraced Christianity I not only left them off but did not even read newspaper tales. . . . In examining myself I found my mind was getting too dull and matter-of-fact in its operations . . . and I therefore determined to

¹ Bundy, *Life of Gen. J. A. Garfield*, p. 36.

take up a course of reading a few volumes of the best authors of fiction." In 1856 he took up Hebrew as a voluntary study, and continued with the English authors—Shakespeare, Scott, Tennyson.

The evidence of liberalization shown in the above reading appears still more strongly in his comments on political biography, something he had utterly eschewed since boyhood. On March 3, 1856, he wrote to Miss Rudolph: "Have you seen Irving's 'Life of Washington'? It is a most thrilling work. Hard-hearted as I am, I cried more than a dozen times while reading the last 50 pages of the first volume." But the work which took the strongest hold upon him was *The Life, Letters and Poetry of Theodor Körner, the Poet Warrior of Germany*, upon which he based a considerable literary effort. "I found the Quarterly out of copy," he wrote Fuller (March 18), "and though I had already written one article for it [the March number] yet the Editors decreed that I must come to the rescue and write another. So I went at it and have just completed an article of 33 manuscript pages and sent it to our printers."¹

The article was an enthusiastic critique upon the life and works of Körner, in which was displayed Garfield's still undiminished admiration of things German, but its main interest in the history of Garfield's development is that in it he recanted his earlier "nonresistance," as he had already cast aside his political "come-outerism." "Körner's whole life," he wrote,² "gives a withering rebuke to that puling sentimentalism of modern days which, in the safe closet, will pray for freedom; but holds up its hands in pious horror when the sword is unsheathed to purchase that precious boon amid the carnage of the battle-field." The belligerency of the article drew forth an astonished protest from Fuller, which led Garfield to explain his position. "I am by no means an advocate of war," he said (May 31), ". . . but perhaps we should both agree in justifying such a war as that of the revolution, or any one where liberty or slavery were in the struggle. Körner often speaks of fighting for glory, but I

¹ Fuller, *Reminiscences of J. A. Garfield*, p. 218.

² *Ibid.*, p. 244.

do not at all agree with that spirit and did not intend to give countenance to it in my article."¹

It is worth noting that at this same time, in the Equitable Fraternity meeting on May 13, Garfield upheld in debate the affirmative of the question "Is war justifiable?" but was unable to win over his fellow Oudens. The secretary in his minutes said, "After a fierce struggle of the unyielding combatants, it was finally decided that war is unjustifiable, of which the different nations ought certainly to be informed."

The maturing influence of Dr. Hopkins's teaching may also be traced in Garfield's other contributions to the *Quarterly*, in addition to the essay on Körner. Abandoning rhymed horseplay he published in the issue of March, 1856, a poem in blank verse called "Memory," which, while not displaying anything beyond the conventional imagery and rhetoric of a very conventional and very rhetorical literary period, was an honest attempt at serious verse. In the June issue his final contribution was another literary effort in the shape of an essay whose form suggests that it had been tried out as an oration, on "The Province of History." Nothing in it indicated that in the writer's mind history was anything else than a branch of letters, for nothing resembling historical method was taught in the college, nor in fact in the United States, at that time. Garfield's later intense interest in the historical approach to all economic and governmental problems was in no respect a product of his Williams education, any more than was his interest in finance. Neither subject was hinted at in the curriculum of the fifties.

At the close of the winter term came the test for which all Garfield's preparation had been concentrated. "Our examinations are close upon us," he wrote to Miss Rudolph (March 23). "Graduating honors will then be decided and many will be the palpitating hearts that have labored four years in reference to these same honors. I can tell every man in the class whose soul seems bound up in the event, and I can see that each of them, or I will say a majority of them, has sold what is far more valuable than College Honors—their *personal independence* in order to gain favor and a

¹ Fuller, *Reminiscences of J. A. Garfield*, p. 222.

high standing in this trial. . . . Though I confess that I am ambitious yet I can truly say that I have never swerved from my own best judgment in order to gain favor with my class or with the faculty. . . . I have endeavored to have a higher object than college honors before me and yet I have endeavored to stand among the first of my class."

The result was all that he could have hoped. He wrote to Fuller (May 15): "The graduating honors have been awarded. All who averaged $9 \frac{9}{10}$ on a scale of ten in all the departments of College duty receive honors. A man must average 6 in order to be permitted to make a graduating speech. Out of 45 members there were only 28 who marked high enough to obtain this last named appointment and 6 who received graduating honors. I am one of the six and received the Metaphysical Oration which is considered second only to the Valedictory, which is always awarded to one who has been here the full time, other things being nearly equal. . . . I know you will rejoice with me in any distinction fairly gained and especially with the disadvantages under which I labored in coming so late in the course."¹

As a fitting end to the ordeal came a pleasant episode described in a letter to Miss Rudolph on April 6. "On the evening of the day that our examinations closed, the whole senior class were invited to a party at the President's. He presented each of us to his wife and daughters and to a company of about 20 ladies who reside in the village. After a promiscuous chat of two hours we were regaled with ice-cream, lemonade, cakes, nuts and the whole category of sweet meats. Music by the ladies and class songs from the students concluded the sociability of the evening at about half past ten o'clock. Our President, good noble soul that he is, was all around among us with a kind and familiar word for every body and so he adds to our admiration for his greatness a strong deep love for his good kind heart. Such a man I love, that can be great and move among the sublime grandeurs of the world of thought like a giant and can at the same time make the social circle bright and cheerful with his genial heart."

¹ Fuller, *Reminiscences of J. A. Garfield*, p. 220.

Even after having passed these examinations there still remained one more term of work, which continued in the same lines—Butler's Analogy and Paley's Natural Theology under the president, Kames's Criticism under Bascom. These Garfield studied with all his usual seriousness, but he said less about them owing to his concentration upon a grave personal problem—that of his own future. Two roads lay open before him, to preach in the Disciple ministry or to become a teacher and, in case he decided to teach, he must choose further whether to return to the Eclectic or to strike out for himself. The first alternative, that of preaching, was strongly urged on him by some friends, and opportunities came his way; but as the spring of 1856 wore on Garfield grew less and less inclined to enter that field. So far as can be made out, it seems to have been the result of his discovery that the Disciples as a body counted for little in New England and the East and that the impressions of their coming triumph with which he had left Hiram entirely faded away with greater experience.

Some of his letters to Miss Rudolph at this time will serve to indicate his rising realization of the true state of things. "I want very much to talk with you," he wrote (May 2), "in reference to my future course of life and my duty in regard to choosing some calling. The disorganized and distracted state of the Brotherhood rather repels me from them and renders the ministry an unpromising field." May 18 he used still stronger language. "It is always disagreeable to talk of money in connection with the Gospel, and yet I must and will say that I do not intend to abandon our earthly support to the tender mercies of our Brotherhood. To enter the field at present when they are all torn up into warring factions is unpleasant and it almost seems as if one's efforts would be neutralized by such things." June 9, after attending a yearly meeting at Millville, he wrote in discouragement: "The cause, east of the river, looks rather dark and gloomy and it seems to me there is a great want of Christian devotion. Indeed I think our Brethren are proverbial for their lack of spirituality and personal piety and I am sometimes almost discouraged in regard to the Reforma-

tion and doubt whether there has been much real gain by it." A few days later he definitely declined an offer from a Disciple church. "I think I shall not become a preacher now, if I ever do," he remarked to Miss Rudolph (June 13).

These quotations speak volumes as to the change in Garfield's point of view since he left Ohio, for any such ideas regarding his own church would then have been inconceivable to him. It was the penalty of such a temperament as his that the unmeasured enthusiasm with which, in his youth, he gave himself up to a new interest, such as the Disciple religious life, the Eclectic, a love affair, a friendship, was bound from the nature of things to land in a revulsion. The process of sentimental idealization was carried so far that ultimately his own cooler mentality revolted. But it was also a characteristic of Garfield's nature that change, even under any such inner revolution, was fearfully difficult, and the process of altering any course or habit of this nature was overwhelmingly depressing.

This does not mean that Garfield underwent any period of philosophic or agnostic doubt. His own religious faith seems to have undergone no disturbance; it was merely his attitude toward the "Campbellite" reformation. His letters show that he was still full of religious zeal, and that he kept up the custom of reading the Bible in correspondence with his mother, Miss Rudolph and, later, "Sister Rebecca Sellick." An anecdote of this spring illustrates this habit. When Garfield, fulfilling the duty of every Williams man, climbed Mount Greylock in June, 1856, he sent back a rapturous description of the view from the summit, including the wide sweep from the Catskills to the Green Mountains and "the towering top of old Monadnock at whose foot my Mother was born." "Its New Hampshire base is lost in clouds and shadows but its top is all on fire with the glory of the sunset. . . . But the sun has gone," he broke off, "and night has fallen upon us. I must hurry down to assist my companions to gather boughs and prepare a camp and beds for the night." A classmate, E. N. Manley, described what followed. "There was a goodly gathering of students about their campfire when Garfield, the recognized leader, taking a copy

of the New Testament from his pocket, said, 'Boys, I am accustomed to read a chapter with my absent mother, every night; shall I read it aloud?' All assenting he read to us the chapter his Mother in Ohio was then reading, and called on a classmate to pray."¹

The alternative to preaching was teaching, and here Garfield found himself under the painful necessity of making a choice between going back to his old school, the Eclectic, or making far more money in any one of a number of places open to him in the East. The trouble was that in this field his experience at Williams had brought about a disillusionment. Garfield was coming to realize how fragmentary the course was at Hiram and how far the educational side was subordinated to the religious. The principal, A. Sutton Hayden, was an eloquent preacher and, as Garfield's journal shows, was a kindly leader and friend of the young, but he was far more interested in preaching than in administration, and the school seemed to be running down. Garfield's principal informants in this respect were Miss Rudolph and Miss Booth, who strongly urged him to return to the Eclectic, on the grounds of duty, and to help restore it to vigor. But he was increasingly loth to commit himself.

On February 3 he wrote to the former: "What do you hear about the school this winter and how do the brethren feel in reference to it? At present I will only say that I do not want to go there unless there are some more marks of energy and force than I have seen manifested there for the last year." By March he was still more definite. A rumor had appeared in Hiram that he would not return if Hayden continued at the head. This he denied, but went on (March 3): "I have said and still say (in all love to Bro. H) if he is to remain the Principal permanently I will not go there. I say this with a full appreciation of his worth as a preacher but I know and so do you all that the School cannot thrive as it should under his discipline and teaching." In spite of this, Garfield could not break away from the school of his youth and the home of the woman he intended to marry. In July, regardless of the fact that the only offer Hayden could make

¹ Bundy, *Life of Gen. J. A. Garfield*, p. 41.

him was six hundred dollars and he could get very much more near Williamstown, he wrote to Miss Rudolph (July 6): "I think on the whole I shall accept his offer, for one year. . . . Your views and mine coincide perfectly in regard to the Presidency of the Eclectic. I have by no means aspired to it nor do I want it. Were I a third person I would counsel the trustees not to give it into the hands of so young a person as I am."

With matters thus settled, at least for the time being, Garfield finished his senior year. One drawback he encountered was an actual lack of money for his final expenses, but he was helped out by friends at Poestenkill and in Ohio and by his mother, who sent him ninety-eight dollars, a sum representing for her no small self-sacrifice. Her son fully recognized what her devotion to him had meant in his life. In reflecting on his career, on his birthday, November 19, 1855, he had written in the journal, "At every turning point in my life she has been the moulding agent."

There remained one more barrier to pass, namely, a general final examination, by an outside examining board, in preparation for which Garfield reviewed nearly everything that entered into the college curriculum. It was a prodigious effort for him. He spoke of being "in a perfect whirlwind of work." Finally he reported to Miss Rudolph (July 13): "For two days (eight hours a day) we were 'put through' by the Sachems and Sages of New England and at the conclusion of the second day, the examining committee announced that 44 of the class had creditably acquitted themselves and were accordingly admitted 'ad primum gradum liberalium artium.' I am more in need of rest than at any time since I came East. I worked off about 20 pounds of flesh in the last eight weeks but now I shall regain it soon, I think."

All that remained now was to perfect the "Metaphysical Oration" in the so-called "senior vacation" between the examinations and Commencement, August 6. Garfield took refuge once more with the Poestenkill friends and for two weeks did little more than sleep and rest. With heaven-scaling courage he had taken the subject of "Matter and Spirit"

for his oration, which he proposed to cover in the assigned six minutes. He wrote to Fuller: "In the hurry and bustle of the examinations and the weariness that followed, I have but poorly prepared myself for the duties of Commencement day. However I hope to do something." (July 25.)¹

For his graduation day Garfield assembled a small group of friends. He had some hopes of bringing both Miss Booth and Miss Rudolph, but the former failed him. The latter, however, courageously traveled to Troy and joined him at Poestenkill. During the two years since the two people had declared their mutual affection in the "lower chapel" at Hiram and their intention to remain free from formal engagements, Garfield had come to look upon Miss Rudolph as his future wife. It was true that he still felt at times a strange uncertainty of his own mind, as in the summer of 1855, when, on arriving in Ohio, a sudden panic of doubt led him to defer going to see her for some weeks. But since then their correspondence had been that of avowed lovers and it was in the character of his bride-to-be that she made the journey. Leaving the hospitable home of the Learneds on July 2, Garfield went on with Miss Rudolph, Corydon Fuller and his wife, and Miss Sellick "the newly found Sister," to the final ceremonies.

Engrossed as he was in the duties of the Commencement season, Garfield has left no report, but his admiring friend, Fuller, wrote in his *Reminiscences* a detailed narrative through which one can trace the progress of the little party through all the usual doings. They climbed Stone Hill, they saw the museums, they attended the Baccalaureate by President Hopkins, the annual sermon before the Mills Theological Society, the Missionary Jubilee held to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of a famous prayer meeting beneath a haystack, out of which grew the movement for organized foreign missions. On that occasion they heard seventeen speakers, and the same evening, at the annual rhetorical exhibition known traditionally as "the Moonlights," they heard nine more orations from undergraduates, followed by an address before the Literary Societies by Professor Hunt-

¹ Fuller, *Reminiscences of J. A. Garfield*, p. 227.

ington of Harvard. "He commenced speaking at fifteen minutes before 10 o'clock p.m.," wrote Fuller admiringly "to an audience which had been listening to speeches since 9 o'clock in the morning and yet succeeded in gaining and holding the attention of nearly every one until he closed. I know of no higher compliment to give a speaker."¹

On Wednesday, August 6, came Commencement, "in storm and tempest. The mountain tops were hidden in misty clouds and the valley was dark and dismal." At the last minute Garfield found himself unexpectedly short of funds to such a degree that he actually felt unable to meet the necessary final fees. According to Fuller (p. 235), he was helped out of this painful situation by a loan from President Hopkins of sixty dollars, which, as will be seen, he repaid in later years. The ceremony took place in the old village church at the other end of the main street from where the college buildings stood, and thither the academic procession marched in the wet from the college chapel, Griffin Hall. According to the custom of those days, the audience occupied the gallery, and there the two Fullers and the two young ladies sat, waiting through the long list of class speakers until the Metaphysical Oration, the twentieth and last in the forenoon, should be reached. It was the custom for the young ladies of the village and those visiting to provide themselves with a number of small bouquets of flowers and when some friend, or some favorite, or some especially fine speaker finished, to throw one of these bouquets, with practiced hand, upon the stage. This custom is referred to in the following description, from Fuller's *Reminiscences*, of Garfield's "Metaphysical Oration"—"Matter and Spirit."

"President Hopkins," writes Fuller,² "sat in the high pulpit, and the speaker stood on the platform below and before him. From the first Mr. Garfield commanded the attention of the entire audience, and as his eloquent sentences filled the great church, and he grew earnest under the inspiration of the occasion, the President leaned forward and looked down upon the stalwart orator with the pride

¹ Fuller, *Reminiscences of J. A. Garfield*, pp. 227-234.

² *Ibid.*, p. 237.

and affection he might have felt for a son. When Garfield reached his peroration and finally closed his speech, the church shook with the thunder of applause and dozens of bouquets were showered at his feet. Notwithstanding the fact that the audience were impatient for dinner and had been restless during several of the preceding speeches, he had been successful in securing the favor of all, and the universal verdict was that his was the great oration of the day." The report of the Commencement printed in the *Springfield Republican* after calling the graduating speeches "generally respectable without being brilliant," added, "Some of the speakers, however, exhibited a high order of merit. . . . Mr. Garfield's Metaphysical Oration betrayed much thought and won three bouquets." (August 7, 1856.)

With this last triumph Garfield's college career would fitly close. He should have left the Commencement stage and gone away in peace in company with his friends, labors ended, toils and successes over. But unfortunately nothing of the kind occurred. The editorial board of the *Williams Quarterly* had to meet that very evening, struggle vainly to square the accounts of the periodical and finally disband long after midnight, having in desperation made an assessment of ten dollars a head to cover the deficit. This was Garfield's farewell to his undergraduate days. The Commencement party returned again to Poestenkill and, finally tearing himself loose, James Garfield and his future bride left for the West August 12. The college days were definitely over and a new phase of life must now begin.

In summing up Garfield's college career, it is evident that we have a sensitive, impressionable nature, active mentally and physically, quick to feel new influences but at the same time stubbornly slow to put off the old. In spite of all he had learned, in spite of the illumination of Dr. Hopkins's instruction and the sudden revulsion on his part against the narrowness of the Disciples' outlook, he could not cut loose from his habits of old days, and when he left Williams it was only to return to his old school and his old associates. But it was with the memories of a success that for one in his situation might be called remarkable, if not brilliant. Breaking

into the middle of this little self-centered college community, with all its habits fixed and its leaders marked out, he had won for himself a place among the first in every line. He was one of the very highest scholars; he was active in religious life, in spite of his difference in creed; he was among the foremost in all undergraduate activities, from the editorship of the *Quarterly* and one of the presidents of the Philologian to the leadership of the nonfraternity men in class politics. He was recognized as one of the best debaters in college. And more than most of his class he had absorbed with avidity every atom of instruction there was to be found in the assigned studies, and had drunk profoundly of the inspiration of Mark Hopkins's intellectual springs. All that there was to get in Williams College and the Williamstown valley of 1854-1856 he had tasted or acquired. What effect all this splendid effort at self-improvement and self-expression was to have upon the young man remained to be determined in the critical years after graduation.

What Garfield himself got from his two years at Williams may easily be summed up. In the first place, and to him at the time the most important, he received a thorough initiation into logical thinking on matters religious and philosophical instead of the merely emotional and declamatory religious thought to which he was accustomed. As a mental education he found Dr. Hopkins's instruction something of permanent importance in his life. From his other professors he gained additional instruction in their subjects, but from Mark Hopkins he learned how to think. In the second place, what was less apparent to him at the time but what seems, on the survey of his career, fully as important, he learned a great deal of the art of getting on with people. He stood absolutely on his merits so far as students and faculty were concerned. He received no added consideration because of his Disciple preaching, but rather the reverse. He had to make his own way. He had to adjust himself to living with and respecting the minds and characters of individuals who accepted none of the doctrines he had hitherto considered essential. Further than that he had to live with young men of different social background and differing politics. In short, he had his first

experience in the outside world. In this there can be no doubt that he achieved a real success and that the ability he acquired to respect the beliefs and habits of others was to him a lasting influence. It broke down the sectarian narrowness which by 1853 had come to threaten his future development and left him, while no less a follower of Alexander Campbell, so modified in his outlook that he was fitted to go into the world and be a man among men.

CHAPTER IV
THE PRINCIPAL OF "THE ECLECTIC"
1856-1859

YOUNG Garfield returned to resume his duties at the Eclectic only to fall, almost at once, into a state of great uncertainty as to himself and his future which rapidly grew into a condition of the utmost gloom and depression. It would seem as though the reaction from the eager enjoyment of things at Williams, the intellectual interests and the college life, and from the refuge among admiring friends at Poestenkill, made the home town and the home tasks flat and uninspiring, the old-time neighbors and acquaintances prosaic and uninteresting. Such is the common occurrence with young men or women fresh from the stimulation of their college.

Under the sway of this mood everything turned to ashes. His feeling about the school was expressed in a letter to Fuller (Sept. 8): "We have about 275 scholars and about the same amount of drudgery that we always have here. Sutton [*i.e.*, Hayden] is away most of the time and cant govern and I wont, under the present arrangements. . . . My stay here will certainly be very short; no longer at most than the year for which I have engaged. Had I known before all I know now I would not have come here at all." At the same time he experienced a paralyzing doubt as to whether Miss Rudolph and he were really suited to one another. As the school seemed flat and unprofitable compared to Williams, so the woman he had been dreaming about suddenly seemed unexciting, unresponsive in contrast to the ideal he had held before him, and also, doubtless, in contrast to the fluent and expressive "Sister Rebecca" whom he had come to know and admire during his last year at Williams. Highly as he esteemed Miss Sellick, Garfield had not lost his heart

to her, but the contrast between her quick responsiveness and the reticence and quiet of Miss Rudolph made him wonder whether he could really be happy all his life with the latter. At the same time he felt that he could not give her up. When Miss Rudolph, dealing with the situation in her usual direct and clear-minded fashion, said he must consider himself perfectly free, he replied, "No, I can't lose you; but give me time." A year later he wrote to her (October 24, 1857): "There lie before me only two courses in life. . . . I must either pass my life with you or I must pass it alone. There is not—nor has there ever been—a third course." In this state of uncertainty he passed two years of extreme depression and unhappiness, a period often referred to by the two in their later life as the "black time" or the "years of darkness."

It is significant of Garfield's nature that in spite of his depression and in spite of his uncertainty as to whether he really wished to remain at the Eclectic, he exhibited the utmost energy in his teaching and preaching, went on from success to success and, surmounting all obstacles, made himself, within three years from the time he returned from Williams, not only the head of the institution, but a religious and political influence in the community.¹ Without tracing every step, a few extracts from his correspondence and journals will illustrate the spirit in which he won his way to the front.

In October of the first year he described his program to his mother (October 2, 1856): "I am delivering a course of fifteen lectures on Grammar in the evenings and teaching my six classes a day and speaking . . . to some church once or twice Sunday. . . . You ask me in your good little note if I am not unhappy. Well, I can not say that I am the happiest one in the world. . . . But I have not time to be very unhappy." In the same vein he wrote to Fuller, during the second term (December 14): "We have a school of about 180 students and are doing well. I have all the influence here I could ask, but as you know, I am not contented to stay

¹ F. M. Green, *History of Hiram College*, pp. 107-133.

here. What my course of life will be is an extremely doubtful question."¹

Meanwhile there was a movement in progress among sundry elements connected with the school and in the board of trustees to bring about the replacement of Hayden in the principalship by Garfield, in view of his training, his energy and his power in preaching as well as teaching. On the other hand, the more conservative, more highly denominational Disciples preferred Norman Dunshee, a trained classical scholar, who had been long at the school and was considerably older than Garfield, but was decidedly narrower in his experience and outlook. There was much gossip and, according to Garfield, no little backbiting. "A storm is gathering over me," he wrote to Miss Rudolph (May 18). "Some of my good friends (?) are afraid that the young man is ambitious and they think it best to take down his feather a little.

. . . All these things put the Trustees in a quandary and they will probably feel about N. [*i.e.*, Norman Dunshee] and me as a church committee once did. One of two candidates for the ministry, they decided, had a genuine call but was not qualified. The other was qualified but had not a genuine call. The Lord seems to have made the same mistake in reference to the case before us. . . . I am sometimes so disgusted with the whole thing as to be almost resolved to throw it all away and go to the more 'liberal deeds of the Law.' "

In this letter appears the first mention to anyone except himself of a new ambition, directed toward the law. Nearly three years before, when he stopped on his way to Williamstown to call on a lawyer friend, he had recorded this memorandum in his journal (June 29, 1854). "Were it not for the religion of Christ I should long ago have placed my mark in that direction, and though I do not regard the Legal Profession [as] incompatible with Christianity, still I think it would be much more difficult to cultivate and preserve that purity of heart and devotedness to the cause of Christ which partakes of those ambitious aspirations that accompany the gentlemen of the Bar." By 1857 he had shaken off the ex-

¹ Fuller, *Reminiscences of J. A. Garfield*, p. 241.

treme religious scruples which had dominated him in the spring of 1854, but he was no more prompt in coming to a decision involving a change and many years were to pass before this idea bore any fruit.

By the end of the spring term the difficulty about the principalship was solved. "Bro Hayden" resigned, to devote himself to the preaching which was his forte, and the trustees voted that the teachers should carry on the school with Garfield as "Chairman." This made him *de facto* head. It was in connection with the headship that Garfield again exemplified what was coming to be a principle of life with him, almost a superstition, namely, never to ask for promotion. He wrote to Fuller an account of his advancement which well illustrates this habit. He said (August 30): "All the lies of ancient and modern date were arrayed and marshalled against me and yet I never by word or action manifested the least desire to gain the Presidency of the Eclectic. However, the Trustees were urging me to take charge of the school and after a long time I determined to do so, partly to hold it up, and partly to stop the mouths of the barking hounds around me. I have taken it and I am determined that it shall move for *one year*."¹

At the opening of the next term, the comment in his journal shows the grim mood in which he assumed his duties. "We have plunged in with the Eclectic in our teeth and with it we will sink or swim for one year and so far as I am concerned for *one only*, I think. Mem. I here record it that I go into this school deliberately assuming the character of a financial fool." After the term was well started he wrote to Fuller with a note of pugnacity hitherto lacking from his letters (August 30): "A score are looking on with vulture eyes and longing for me to fail, and I am resolved that they shall not be gratified, if work, and nerve and backbone can avail anything. So you see how I am engaged. I have not written a dozen letters, except business letters for the last three months, but I have been working for the school. We have raised over \$400 to build a fence around the Eclectic grounds. We have remodeled the government, published

¹ Fuller, *Reminiscences of J. A. Garfield*, p. 256.

rules, published a new catalogue and have now, the fourth week, 250 students (no primary) as orderly as clockwork and all hard at work. Our teachers are Dunshee, Everest, Rhodes, and Almeda. I teach seven classes and take entire charge of the school and its correspondence besides. I have the most advanced classes in the school and deliver most of the morning lectures."

There can be little doubt that Garfield in his mood of depression exaggerated the extent and the importance of the hostile criticism in Hiram. October 13 he wrote in his journal, with some of his former introspectiveness: "I have felt a sort of grieved, soured, angry unhappiness all day today, and it clings about my heart yet like the drapery of a thunder cloud. Perhaps I am too sensitive, and too desirous of the approbation of others. But it seems to me sometimes that I am here at Hiram not so much for any love they have for me, as for a kind of necessity they are under of making use of my muscle and brains to do the work of the school,—and they write across every act of mine 'For Ambitious Purposes'—'Sinister motives'—'Power more in manner than in matter'—'social manners bad'—'morals doubtful.'"

But it took only a month or two of success to lay the tongues of gossip and criticism at rest. By the end of the term, which was followed by a teachers' institute, he felt encouraged to write (November 8): "I am very tired but I think that the term and the Institute have done a fine work for the school. My aim has been to introduce the school more fully to the community in general, especially of this county. I think much has been done to that effect. We have reached some of the strongest men in the county and they are now our friends." In a letter to one of the trustees he dwelt on this new policy with some emphasis (Austin, November 9): "I think we have made a mark on a new class of people. Bro. Hayden's efforts were mainly directed toward getting Disciples here. It seems to me that Disciples will come here any way. Our special efforts should be directed toward the community in general, so that we shall take the lead in the educational interests of the community."

During the winter and spring, although he still spoke of

his occupation as temporary, his letters and his journal show growing confidence and satisfaction. In January he wrote to a friend (January 5): "Everything looks bright for the spring term. Our good boys are all coming back. I promise myself a fine time. There was some seed sown last fall which will come up when the snow is gone."

The journal shows that Garfield was fully as much preacher as teacher. He was at it constantly in Disciple churches round about and in the school, finding not only an outlet for his growing powers as a speaker, but also calm for his soul. A characteristic picture of a Disciple service at its best is found in one of the few letters of Miss Booth which have been preserved. She wrote to Miss Rudolph: "I wish you could have been here yesterday for it was one of our blessed good days. . . . Three came forward for baptism and just as the shades of a most beautiful evening were closing around we walked down to the water. . . . A large assembly were gathered around that little sheet of water and yet all were so hushed, so still and motionless that the slight murmur among the leaves as they were stirred by the gentle wind could be distinctly heard. Then James's voice rose in tones so clear and melodious, his thoughts so perfectly adapted to the occasion that it seemed as if we had been suddenly transplanted away from earth to some tranquil, beautiful region of heaven." (September 28, 1857.)

Garfield watched and criticised his own preaching in the journal: "Oct 11 This evening I spoke on the Marriage supper. I did not seem to get the real ring of genuine power in it. It is very strange that I can sometimes feel the power of control surging along every muscle and again I am like a diver who comes up and looks at his open palm to see if he has brought up a pearl but he finds no pearl nor even any shell."

In the winter of 1858 the Eclectic was touched by the great revival of that year which affected all denominations. His letters and the journal were filled with references to it. On February 27 he explained to Miss Rudolph that he could not leave the school to keep an engagement with her since "the meeting here was in mid-swing and I felt that it would

not do to leave it. . . . This evening I spoke the 27th discourse of the series. Seven came forward."

Everything was going well upon the surface, yet Garfield was still conscious of imperfect scope for his powers. He wrote to Fuller (January 16): "A few weeks ago I cleared up the last of my college debts and am now, for the first time in several years, free pecuniarily. You and I know that teaching is not the work in which a man can live and grow. I am succeeding in the school here better than I had any reason to hope, yet my heart will never be satisfied to spend my life in teaching. Indeed I never expect to be satisfied in this life; but yet I think there are other fields in which one can do more. I have been for some time,—indeed for years,—thinking of the law, though my early prejudices were very strong against it. . . . I have been reading law a little from time to time, and should I conclude to practice I could begin without a great deal of delay."¹ This letter shows well the peculiar mood in which Garfield worked these years, achieving success and taking pleasure in it, yet steadily unsatisfied. It is a commentary on Garfield's slowness to make a complete change that, in spite of these words, he continued to be the head of the school, actually or nominally, until positively forced out of it by circumstances, five years later.

For all his inner doubts, Garfield felt encouraged at the close of the school year, and played his full part in an effort to raise money among the Disciples to cancel the school debt, "lobbying for Hiram," as he expressed it. After the Commencement he wrote in the journal: "Audience of nearly 7000 in attendance. A good performance and a good mark for the school." He then went on a trip through Indiana and into Illinois, inspecting sundry Disciple schools with a critical eye. After visiting Butler College he wrote (J. H. Rhodes, June 30): "I have spent two days . . . attending the examinations, exhibitions &c and becoming acquainted with the financial and literary management of the college. Some fine things in the first & some soft spots in the latter. . . . Too much velvet-handed professorishness about some of them." Some weeks later, after completing his survey and

¹ Fuller, *Reminiscences of J. A. Garfield*, p. 268.

returning to Hiram, he was still more convinced of the educational superiority of his own institution.

"I have visited several Colleges and higher seminaries," he wrote (B. A. Hinsdale, July 17), "and endeavored to glean lessons of wisdom from their management. All this time I have not been able to resist the tendency to institute comparisons between them and the Eclectic. No doubt I am prejudiced, but on the whole I can very justly say that nowhere have I seen the answering flash of intellect and that bold independence of thought which characterizes the Eclectic students. The conventionalism of which you complain at Hudson I fully understand and I have witnessed it 'ad nauseam.' . . . I believe its cause is found in the pedantry and self-conceit of Professors. Thoughts that come to us with a Professor's mortgage upon them will never make us free. We shall be mortgaged thinkers and on every question shall repeat Shylock's question 'Is it so nominated in the bond?'"

This idea of self-development as the real aim of study was so strongly held that he deprecated too great submission to the influence of teaching personalities, even when they were powerful. "It is every man's duty," he wrote to Hinsdale (December 2, 1859), "to preserve his own individuality, though this is not incompatible with his being influenced and guided in his development by others. But there are some schools where one mind or one set of ideas exercise a tyrannic control in moulding & directing the views and sentiments of students. As marked instances of this I would mention Oberlin among literary institutions and Andover among Theological Seminaries. Now this kind of influence I deprecate as wholly evil in its tendencies."

Garfield's return to a normal cheerfulness and courage was undoubtedly aided by the influence of several new friends who appealed to the different sides of his nature and illustrated the different qualities which led to friendship. Directly connected with his situation in the Eclectic was Harmon Austin, one of the trustees, a business man of Warren, in the neighboring county of Trumbull; a prominent Disciple gifted with the utmost common sense and shrewd-

ness in all matters involving the management of men or affairs. From this year onward he took a kindly interest in the young teacher and rapidly developed into his strongest friend, supporter and adviser on the board. One of Garfield's letters of this year shows the sort of confidence that the older man inspired in him: "Oct. 4 1858. My dear Brother. . . . Just at this moment I desire nothing more than to have a visit with yourself. I feel a great need of turning away from the chilling breath of unfriendly censure and the hot sickly breath of flattery to a clear and quiet atmosphere of faithful and friendly truth. As I believe you incapable of flattering or being flattered I value your friendship and counsels as I value that of very few of my friends."

Wholly different from Austin was a new friend whom Garfield found among the teachers of the institute, J. Harrison Rhodes. He had been a student the year before Garfield went to Williams, but it was only when the two were both on the faculty in 1857 that they became intimate. Rhodes was a man of quick intelligence, of penetrating and understanding literary feeling and of great responsiveness. To Garfield he supplied what seemed to be a need of the latter's nature, an intimate, confidential friend, ready to give the fullest sympathy and to venture with him into any field of thought, feeling or aspiration. What Corydon Fuller had been in the years after 1851, Rhodes now became, the sharer of Garfield's deepest affections and most sacred thoughts.

The third friend who now began to assume a prominent place differed from either of the others. If Garfield came to honor and respect Austin as a friend and protector, to love Rhodes as a sympathetic companion, he became attached to Burke Aaron Hinsdale for still different reasons. Hinsdale was considerably younger than Garfield, and had been a student at Hiram in 1853-1854—"a gawky boy, the smell of the furrow upon my garments," as he later said.¹ In 1857, doubtful as to his future career, Hinsdale turned to his former teacher and laid his perplexities before him. Garfield's answers show that he took up and discussed his possible courses in life with the greatest interest and sympathy,

¹ Bundy, *Life of Gen. J. A. Garfield*, p. 29.

urging him especially to continue his studies, if he possibly could. With this correspondence began a friendship singularly sound and valuable for both men. Hinsdale was no sympathetic responsive soul like Rhodes, but a man of downright mental strength; not flexible nor broad, but eminently direct and rational. In him Garfield found a friend unshakably faithful and devoted, but without a trace of either sentimentality or emotionality; a man whose intellectual ability was always at a friend's command.

As a final evidence of Garfield's return to a normal outlook on life, the year 1858 saw him bringing to a definite solution the personal problem which had been perplexing him. Twice he visited his Poestenkill friends, in the summer of 1857 and again in the winter of 1858, when news came that "Sister Maria" Learned was seriously ill with pneumonia, and her son, who had come to Hiram to be under Garfield's teaching, was called home. But each time he returned to Ohio the more convinced that Miss Rudolph was the woman he must marry, if any. As early as October, 1857, he asked her frankly whether she would dare to marry so moody a man. She replied that her courage was sufficient, but that she could not settle his problems for him. At last in the spring of 1858 he stepped to firm ground. "Apr. 17. Went to Ravenna with C. Held an examination of teachers. Returned to Hiram by 5 p.m. During this ride I conversed with C on the past of our lives and with much regret for the past and hope and fear for the future we resolved that we will try life in union before many months." The next letter he wrote to Miss Rudolph, some six weeks later (May 30) was characteristic of innumerable grooms-to-be: "I am in trouble about a house for us; can't find one nor build. I don't want much parade about our marriage. Arrange that as you think best." This has the sound of the usual masculine state of mind.

In the vacation between the closing of the spring term and the opening of the autumn term, Garfield, as already mentioned, went on a journey to the westward in Indiana and Illinois. Ostensibly he wished to visit other institutions, but in reality he was driven by the same restlessness which de-

scended upon him when he was not busy in teaching or preaching. Going first to a Disciple "protracted meeting" at Painesville, he next visited Garfield relatives in north-western Ohio, at Bryan, and then traveled rapidly from place to place in Indiana. He wrote to Miss Rudolph (June 29) of his visit to the Letchers: "I went ahead as a traveler and a stranger and my old aunt who had not seen me for 20 years knew me by my father's looks. . . . I had intended to stay there with Mother over Sunday but when I had been there about an hour I felt as though I wanted to go on. . . . There is a restless and unsatisfied feeling about me a good deal of the time & I cant tell what its cause is. When I stopped at La Fayette I was anxious for the whistle to call me on to the capital. When I am sitting I long to be walking and when I am walking I long to be sitting. No spot or position on earth seems to offer contentment unless it be our home. My hope is in that—and yet I will not conceal the fact that I sometimes fear and tremble even for that. Such a state of feeling is strangely miserable and I think will not continue when we have a home and our interest and love centred there. All who love me can aid me by support & forbearance. I thank God that others—most others—have not such a nature as mine. But probably this is the price of what little power I have."

Undoubtedly this was the final working out of the mood into which he had fallen upon returning from Williams. His letters show him once more indulging in romantic imagery and sentiment, especially over the prairies which he saw in Illinois. He wrote to his mother (July 2, 1858): "I had not the slightest idea of the wonderful character of these ocean lands, for such they may well be called. I might almost say that I was out of sight of land for 80 miles, so much does this prairie region resemble the sea."

To Rhodes he was still more expressive, writing with the emotional sentiment which characterized his earlier self. He regarded Bloomington as "the most beautiful spot I saw in the west. Swelling prairies as far as the eye can reach dotted here and there with groves which look like emerald islands in a summer sea . . . The æsthetic effect of the green

savannahs is altogether new and peculiar. It stands in complete contrast with New England scenery. There every mountain crag and tree stand sharp and clear against the amber sky. But not so on the prairie. Above and beneath all is boundlessness. . . . Such contemplation makes the soul ache with very vastness. . . . No voice, no echo, no whisper of life. You hear and feel your own heart-throbs and them alone. There is a strangely moving power in the majesty of the stillness and silence around you. . . . Oh my dear Harry, I longed to have you beside me, that your intense spirit might have felt with me the enlargement of soul that those prairies gave." (July 19.)

On November 11, 1858, the marriage of James Garfield and Lucretia Rudolph took place at the house of Zeb Rudolph in Hiram. Rather surprisingly, by preference of the groom, a Presbyterian performed the service, President Hitchcock of Western Reserve College at Hudson, instead of a Disciple. It was a quiet family affair, only the relatives of the two being present, with a few intimate friends, such as Harmon Austin; and the ceremony of cutting the bride's loaf at the supper which followed the wedding was almost the only festal element. Elaborate celebrations were not the custom on the Western Reserve and furthermore there was an element of sobriety, or gravity, in this marriage, for the hearts of both had been too much torn recently to permit great jubilation.¹

Garfield showed, even in marrying, that intense reluctance to making any break with the past which marked his whole career. One of the things that made him hesitate was his sense of being bound or limited by marriage. He was determined that, while gaining all that marriage had to give, he would surrender nothing of what he already had. On December 4 he wrote to Rhodes a curious letter showing this state of mind: "I have felt very keenly over the isolating effects of marriage in my friends. There may be something of it unavoidable—but I am very sure it will not be a manifestation of my life. . . . It will be no small part of the joy of a home that it is a focal center of social happiness—not

¹ Mrs. J. A. Garfield, 1912.

social in the narrow sense of husband and wife—but in the broader sense of all those we love.”

Almost immediately after his marriage Garfield was involved in a public debate that was one of the landmarks in his career. But first it is necessary to observe the use he had been making of his debating power since he left Williams and no longer had contests in the *Philologian* or the *Equitable Fraternity* to call forth his efforts. In this matter he did not hesitate a moment but plunged at once into the presidential campaign of 1856, transferring to the field of stump speaking all the facility he had acquired in the preceding two years. On November 9, 1856, he wrote to Fuller the following summary of his first political campaign. “In the great political issue of the day I felt myself justified in taking an active part and the moment I was fairly afloat I had more calls to speak than I could respond to. I held three debates, the chief one at Garrettsville. The Democrats challenged me to meet any speaker they might choose in Portage county, for they were not satisfied with their champion (a Warren lawyer) with whom I had debated before. I accepted and they chose the strongest Democrat in the county, the editor of the *Portage Sentinel*. We had an immense audience and made three speeches each. The Republican papers said he was vanquished and his Democratic friends did not deny it. I have delivered twenty-six lectures before the school and several in the churches, making forty in all.”¹

In this encounter Garfield was helped out by his own presence of mind. His opponent had staggered him by reading from a speech of Fremont in Congress a passage that seemed to prove that he took the same ground that the Democratic party did on “Squatter sovereignty.” But during the Ravenna editor’s peroration, Garfield picked up the copy of the *Congressional Globe* and when his turn came he was able to prove him guilty of an attempt to deceive the audience, by showing that what was quoted was a description by Fremont of the Democratic position. Having exposed the fraud, says the account, “Garfield followed up the advantage

¹ Fuller, *Reminiscences of J. A. Garfield*, p. 240.

amid storms of applause, winding up with a peroration so impressive as to astonish everybody, even himself."¹

It is scarcely too much to say that in this autumn's campaigning the future Congressman, politician and leader of the Western Reserve was born. The zest in the new occupation, the joy of battle with the Democratic adversary, the evident satisfaction in his own success—all these show that the old habits and ideals had suddenly been challenged by a new and engrossing occupation. Yet, although this was almost as important a step as he had hitherto taken in his life, there is no sign that he himself realized its significance.

Garfield's journal shows that he spoke in the campaigns of 1857 and 1858, but with less absorption, owing to the lack of political excitement in those years. In December, 1858, however, he agreed to hold a public debate with an itinerant freethinker named Denton, and in so doing committed himself to a far more serious contest than that with Treat in 1852, for Denton was a well-educated man in addition to being a practiced speaker. The proposition that Denton undertook to uphold was the following: "Man, animals and vegetables came into existence by the operation of the laws of spontaneous generation and progressive development, and there is no evidence that there was ever any exertion of direct creative power on this planet." To meet this, or rather to attack it, Garfield went to work with the most intense concentration marshaling facts and organizing arguments. "For the last ten days," he told Rhodes (December 4), "I have spent every vacant hour and used every evening till midnight in reading on the subjects connected with it.

. . . I feel, Harry, so far as my standing before the people and my intellectual strength are concerned, that debate will be the greatest occasion of my life thus far and I must give myself all the book advantages I can. The whole subject of Fossil Geology, Zoology & Botany, Diversity of Language & Unity of the Human Race—all come in as parts and links in the Discussion. There is scarcely a department of thought I have ever entered that does not in some way come into this

¹ St. Louis *Globe-Democrat*, July 16, 1880.

subject. I have never so fully resolved to try anything as this."

The debate itself Garfield described to Rhodes in a letter of January 8, 1859. "I have never been nerved up to such a pitch of mental intensity as previous to and during the discussion. We began on Monday evening Dec. 27 and held two sessions per day, closing Friday evening having made 20 speeches each of half an hour. It was Denton's 40th debate on the same subject, and many with men of high position. His friends were jubilant with the prospect of victory and he was confident of triumph. He is 37 years of age, an Englishman, a rapid, elegant, fiery speaker, quick as a lightning flash to seize a thought. He is a bold, dare-devil kind of man. . . . When engaged he seems bent on victory by whatever means. He understands many of the tricks and graces of oratory and wins powerfully before an audience. I never saw him till the day of the debate and had only such a view of him as I could gather from the paper he edits, several of his published works and the descriptions of those who had seen him. From the moment I saw him he became my object of psychological study.

"He opened with a gallant charge that was full of chivalric and self-confident daring. His attempt was to establish the Nebular hypothesis, believed in by many astronomers, & from the analogy of that draw his first argument for creation by Law. I met every argument on that point and after five fiery speeches he publicly abandoned the position as untenable. He felt very much foiled but kept his composure. He then changed his tactics and attacked the Bible account of creation and for two days & evenings tried every means to divert me from the main point and lead me into a general discussion of the Bible. I refused to be swerved and continued my examination of the Development theory till he was forced into the line of battle again. Then for the last two days & evenings it was a fierce hand to hand fight. I felt my whole soul rise up when he came out in his strength and I may say to you that in almost every encounter I felt the iron of his strength bend in my grasp. In his last speech he acknowledged that I was the strongest opponent he had ever

met. The large hall was densely packed below and above and each session averaged from 700 to 1000 people. On the whole it was by far the most momentous occasion of my life. For none was I ever better prepared and on none did I ever succeed better."

Among Garfield's papers are preserved masses of notes taken in connection with this debate; dozens of pages of headings and quotations arranged in preparation, showing how he reduced to order pretty much all that was known of general science; and no less than thirty-eight pages of notes taken on Denton's speeches during the debate. Although the speeches themselves have vanished, it is not hard to reconstruct, from these notes, the kind of defensive tactics employed by him.

It may be doubted if any single event in his career had a more important effect. He had held his own for five days against a practiced antagonist and had learned his own powers. The Congressman who, fifteen years later, successfully carried the heaviest appropriation bills, fighting, in the constant give and take of five-minute speeches, against critics within and without his party, took his first steps toward this end in the hall at Chagrin Falls. Furthermore, this debate gave Garfield a reputation among classes who had not been particularly touched by his stump speaking in 1856 and 1858. Something of the effects in this direction may be found in a letter of Garfield to Hinsdale (January 10, 1859): "The reports I hear from the debate are much more decisive than I expected to hear. I received a letter from Brother Collins of Chagrin in which he says, 'Since the smoke of the battle has partially cleared away, we begin to see more clearly the victory we have gained. I have yet to see the first man who claims that Denton sustained his positions.' . . . You will not set it down to the charge of self-complacency if I tell you a remark of Brother William Hayden at the close of the debate. Said he to a friend 'If we at Chagrin Falls Church had paid \$100 each toward James's education, we should be more than repaid by this debate.' Many of those friends were once anxious that I should continue to work at my carpenter's trade and said it was silly

for me to spend so much time in school." So the prophet began to gain honor in his own country.

Garfield did not regard the incident as closed when the debate ended. "I am bound to carry the war into Carthage and pursue that miserable atheism to its hole. Bro Collins says that a few Christians are quite unsettled because Denton said & I admitted that the world had existed millions of years. I am astonished at the ignorance of the masses on these subjects. Hugh Miller has it right when he says that the battle of the evidences must now be fought on the field of the natural sciences and those who would be the leaders of their time must be armed with the weapons which the Sciences afford." So Garfield started out on a campaign of lecturing in the vicinity, striking while the iron was hot, and giving a series of lectures on "Geology and Religion" at Chagrin Falls, Newton Falls and Auburn.

In another respect this debate marked a turning-point in Garfield's whole habit of thought by creating a new enthusiasm for science that was to persist through life. "The course of natural science," he commented (to Rhodes, December 4, 1858), "in our colleges is most meager and inefficient. I am every day, especially in Geology, getting views and principles that I never heard in College. I am satisfied that the men who will move the world in its higher circles of thought will be the men who can interpret nature & read to our age the symbols which God has stamped upon her. I hope, Harry, you will not become too exclusively literary in your taste & thus neglect this greater department, greater because it is the literature of God written on the stones—the stars—the trees—the rocks—and more important because of its marked utilitarian character. I think there is a danger of our becoming quite too subjective in our growth and tendencies & especially so in our college course. . . . But I see why I have said all this—because of the theme I am on now. I, like yourself (you see) am trying on my new garments right off."

In this letter appears the first clear sign of Garfield's mature mentality. For the first time, he consciously saw himself as too "subjective" and in spite of the last sentence, in

the letter quoted above, the "new garment" was never discarded but became the prevailing style of thought for him. His perception of the importance of science in education, thus suddenly realized, was never abandoned. At the moment it impelled him to change the curriculum of the Eclectic in a way that was fairly revolutionary. "The school," he wrote Hinsdale (January 10), "has been for the last two years running to literature and language. This is well but not enough. I made the proposal at the last Teachers' meeting that we should have a Geology class in the spring . . . and further it was proposed that there be a Natural History Society formed for awakening an interest in practical science—that there should be a committee appointed who should make excursions on a small scale & report on the Flora, Fauna, Geology, Mineralogy &c of Hiram Hill. . . . This would inculcate a love of nature and what is of very great importance, a habit of close observation. This will render it necessary that we have the next increase in our library made in reference to these subjects. . . . The cause of truth demands that we who are young should arm ourselves with the best weapons as we go out to fight the battles of life."

It was doubtless his success in this severe contest that encouraged Garfield to begin to dream of a future which should combine political life with education. He thought also of the law but hesitated. "When I ask who are the intellectual leaders of our people," he wrote to Rhodes (January 8, 1859), "I find not the lawyers but the teachers, the preachers, educators and authors,—Hopkins, Hildreth, Silliman, Agassiz, Beecher, Chapman, King, Greeley, Holmes, Emerson, &c. These are our men." A few months later, he sketched to Rhodes a plan for becoming a political leader with the Hiram Institute as a base and with his beloved friends, Rhodes, Miss Booth and a few others as supporters and associates. He wanted to work out some kind of a combination between his personal affections and his personal ambitions,—an idea the impossibility of which he could not grasp and from which he could not free himself until circumstances, stronger than his own mixed desires, made the decision for him.

"One thought has grown upon me for several years," he wrote (April 7), "& has become one of the fixed wishes of my life viz that you and I might be associated in our life work. . . . I have desired this primarily because my love for you craved it, and second, I believe that we should help to keep alive in each other those thoughts and sympathies which are so apt to be obliterated when one man . . . is seeking his own aims alone. . . . If I do not take the law the next best course seems to be an Educational and Political one—the latter (Polit) to be reached through the former (Educ). Should this be the chosen plan I know of no place where, every thing counted, we could do better than here. We have a reputation and influence of no inconsiderable power as a capital to start on and I think that judicious management would go very far toward giving us the lead of the chief movements in our immediate territory and ultimately of a larger area. . . . If you should do this, I think the Trustees would dispense with N. soon and your salary would be a fair one."

It is only from incidental references such as these that one can gain an idea of Garfield's own estimate of his success, for he had not yet formed the habit, so constant in his later life, of making periodical surveys of his career. It is clear from the arguments that he used in urging Rhodes to join the staff of the Eclectic, that he laid great stress on the advantage of the greater intellectual freedom to be found at Hiram as compared with any public school, and the high grade of intellectual ambition among the scholars. "What is more," he added (April 23), "you will not be likely to find a place where you can teach such a grade of classes as you can here nor be associated with so high a type of minds as you will find among our students. Commissioner Smyth tells me that in scholarship and general development our school stands not only first among the seminaries but higher than more than half the Colleges of the state. In this school we shall be independent of the interference and control of Boards of Education and can direct the pursuits and energies of the school into whatever channels we may choose."

That Garfield was sincere in his ideals is well illustrated

by his next sentences in the letter. "I was offered \$1500 a year, a few days since to go into the Cleveland University with Humeston. Also an Honorary Degree has been offered me from Granville College, O. (an institution of 20 years and \$80,000 endowment) and a proposition to take the Professorship of Languages at \$1000 to \$1200 a year. Of course this is far better in a money point of view than I can do here, but when I balance my freedom here against the few hundreds of dollars & the restraints of these positions, I find I love freedom and friends best. The very fact that we are working here for a price below what our services would command gives a moral power that nothing else can. The strongest tie that binds me to Hiram is the love and gratitude of those I have influenced here. . . . Go elsewhere and you must begin the work of building for yourself. . . . Come here and a vacant throne is waiting for you. . . . Even in a pecuniary way things are not bad."

That others beside Rhodes were aware of Garfield's budding political ambitions is shown by a significant query in a letter of June 20: "Shall I run for State Senator, or representative, either or neither this fall? If elected it would take me from the school the last half of the winter term. I am in a quandary. I could probably go if I try. I know there would be a theological storm but I don't care for that. The school is what gives me pause." Matters were evidently moving rapidly in this new direction.

Suddenly, while Garfield was thus building air castles he found himself placed by the trustees of the Eclectic in an awkward and difficult situation. Two of the teachers, Everest and Dunshee, evidently felt a distinct antagonism toward their young principal. In 1857 they had openly complained of him for "plotting to get the principalship" and in 1859 they fell foul of him for being at once too liberal in one direction and too conservative in another. When Garfield in February thought some students were spending too much time on chess,—of which he himself was very fond,—he talked to the school on games, "condemning very stoutly all games of chance, but in very guarded terms permitting chess." "All this had the right effect on the school," he told

Rhodes, "but the community, headed by Father Rider, have been raising bloody murder about it. Norman [Dunshee] and Harvey [Everest] go in with them and are as unreasonable and incorrigible as bulls. . . . So we are in a little hot water, but it is winter and we shall cool soon." Garfield had his way in the matter. A little later, when a public controversy on slavery matters had broken out in the Disciple denomination, Garfield, while antislavery in his own views, was averse to bringing the matter into the school, whereas Dunshee and Everest wished to force the issue. "The position I occupy," wrote Garfield to Austin (March 30), "is an exceedingly unpleasant one. I stand between two fires and am nearly as unwilling to be warmed or burnt by one as the other. One party of my friends blame me as being too cool on the slavery question; another for being too hot."

At the May meeting of the board of trustees, when teachers were hired for the coming year, a group of conservative members brought about the sudden dropping of Dunshee without warning and offered the vacant place to Garfield's friend Rhodes, now absent at Williams. Dunshee was one of the oldest teachers in point of service, had taught Garfield himself for years, was well trained in the classics, and was zealous in denominational matters.¹ The only criticism Garfield passed upon him was that his teaching was growing "stolid," but he seems to have known in advance of the possibility of the step. Nevertheless, in writing to Rhodes, he said (May 14): "This move was made by the Trustees without plotting or connivance. I not only did not directly counsel it but did not expect it. No breath of suspicion will fall upon you though much does on me." This was inevitable from the way the thing was done. Garfield reported to Austin (May 21): "As soon as the Trustees were gone he made no scruple of telling his friends that it was all a plot of mine. He has now taken a new position which is likely to afford him more comfort than any view hitherto taken and he is finding quite a number of sympathizers. . . . It is that he is a martyr to the cause of Anti-Slavery!!! . . . The hot element in town catch at this theory eagerly and consider me

¹ Green, *History of Hiram College*, p. 40.

the prince of slaveholders and plotters. . . . P.S. The school almost universally rejoice at the action of the Trustees."

Austin replied with some heat (May 26): "Things have come to a strange pass if the trustees of a public school have not the right to select such teachers as in their opinion the interests of the school demand. And I can assure him [Dunshee] that these considerations and not 'James A Garfield' moved me to the action I took in the matter. . . . Hold a steady hand and stand firmly to your post . . . & you will come out of the muss with more and better friends than you ever had before. . . . We will free you from all imputations." For a while the community and school were agitated by a movement to secure the ousted teacher's reinstatement and a petition was signed and circulated, while Garfield writhed in his defenseless position. "The rumors and slanders are innumerable," he wrote to Austin, "and mainly directed against me. There have been more falsehoods told than several good men could carry to heaven. . . . Clamor will not move me, but when they succeed in neutralizing my influence and usefulness in the school I shall feel justified in leaving." The trustees proved immovable, however, assumed all responsibility and by their action definitely closed the matter.

No one can help feeling that in this case the ousted teacher deserved sympathy for his treatment, whatever may have been the justification from an educational point of view. For Garfield it had the unfortunate result of leaving a permanent evil impression among certain circles in Hiram, for, regardless of any denial he might make, the belief remained that he had plotted with the trustees to remove an anti-slavery teacher because of his beliefs. It is to be noticed that in this case it never seems to have occurred to Garfield to interpose in any way in Dunshee's behalf if only to protect himself from imputations. This was the first appearance of a peculiar trait in Garfield, destined to be manifested in several crises in his career; a total unwillingness on his part to try to make others take action in conformity with his interests. He was in later years to allow himself to be placed in the most painful, even humiliating, situations, simply

because it never seemed to occur to him to protect himself by influencing the acts of others. It was not timidity, nor pride; it simply never entered his head to do so.

In spite of all discomforts the year ended triumphantly. Garfield told Rhodes (June 20): "There is a strong feeling of patriotic enthusiasm among the students in regard to the school. The outside pressure and abuse brought it out. . . . I love it better than I ever did before and the students love us more." Later he wrote to Hinsdale (July 12): "I know of ten [former] students at Hiram who graduate at colleges this season; five at Ann Arbor, two at Williams, one or two at Oberlin, one at Bethany and one at Jefferson College, Pa. This speaks well for the Eclectic. . . . Madame Rumor and her whole family have been exceedingly quiet on the hill since the term closed. I think she is quiet from exhaustion. . . . The excitement of last term, so far as I know, has tended to unite the students and friends of the school more firmly, and I am quite sure there was never so enthusiastic a feeling for the school as now."

Garfield celebrated the conclusion of this third year at the school by a trip to Williams in the summer vacation. His interest in the college had continued unabated since his graduation and his letter files show that he corresponded from time to time with sundry classmates, even during his school labors and inner troubles. But in the year 1858-1859 he was brought into closer touch with it, through the fact that his friend Rhodes, at his suggestion, went there to get a degree with the class of 1859, and was constantly writing letters which called forth from Garfield the most enthusiastic and reminiscent replies. "Do you not feel yourself in a pregnant atmosphere?" he asked (September 22), "where living thoughts spring into being? . . . You must write me a great many little things about the dear old college, for its very *bricks* are precious to me." All through the winter Garfield's letters were filled with comment, advice and reflections, and presently he began to plan for an excursion to Williams to attend Rhodes's graduation.

This plan was suddenly crystallized when he received a letter from President Hopkins (June 2) informing him that

the faculty had unanimously appointed him to deliver a Master's Oration. After a little hesitation, owing to his lack of time and leisure for the preparation of an adequate address, Garfield accepted and started eastward on July 13 with his wife, Miss Booth and two Hiram students, making a long pleasure trip out of the journey. They went to Niagara Falls, thence to Montreal and Quebec, to Portland through the White Mountains, to Boston by boat and to New York by "Sound steamer." There they were joined by Rhodes, and all, except the two Hiram students, went over the familiar ground to Poestenkill, where, to make the reunion complete, Miss Sellick was with the Learned's. Finally they went on to Williams, and Garfield's party was entertained by Professor Lincoln.¹

There has come down no especial report of Garfield's appearance at this Commencement. His oration, with the awkward title of "Art an Educator," was little more than a collection of generalizations and evoked no comment from the reporter of the *Springfield Republican*. Doubtless he gave it well. There is one glimpse of him found in the recollections of Washington Gladden of the graduating class, who said:² "He was a fine, strong young fellow with a ruddy face, a massive head, a cordial manner and an air of mastery. The hour that I spent with him on this occasion gave me a large sense of his power. Few who knew him in those days were surprised at his swift ascent to places of command."

It is much to be regretted that Garfield himself has left no word on this excursion into the lands of the past, for the years intervening since 1856 had done much to steady and mature the romantic and idealistic orator of college days. He had made his first great adjustments, conquered his inward doubts and hesitations and made good his place in the Hiram environment. But whatever his reflections, the occasion was soon terminated, for in a few hours Garfield had taken his departure and, going westward much as in

¹ Mrs. J. A. Garfield, in 1912.

² *Recollections*, p. 76.

1856, reached Hiram August 6, to resume teaching and, as it proved, to begin a new phase of existence, that of politics.

In view of the fact that this summer marked a turning-point in his career, it is a suitable place to pause and consider the testimony of Garfield's contemporaries as to the qualities which had brought him to the position of leadership and success in the Eclectic and in the surrounding region. So far as the public was concerned, it is probable that his preaching habits gained him more general recognition than his teaching, away from the immediate neighborhood of the school. "For full five years," said Hinsdale,¹ "he preached somewhere nearly every Sunday. A number of churches can be named to which he preached 'one-half his time' for several years. He appeared occasionally in the pulpits of churches where he had no regular engagements. At the great 'yearly meetings' where thousands gathered under the old 'Bedford tent' or under the shade, he was a favorite preacher. His sermons live only in the hearts of those who heard them. They were strong in the ethical rather than in the evangelical element. He had small interest in purely theological or ecclesiastical topics. His stricter brethren found much fault with him because he was not more denominational, but the people, wherever he went, would turn out to hear Garfield preach."

These words of Hinsdale, which refer to this last period of his preaching, serve to indicate—and Hinsdale is an excellent witness, since he was himself a preacher—how greatly Garfield's attitude had changed since he went to Williamstown, fairly bristling with denominational aggressiveness. Both Rhodes and Hinsdale ascribed this to the influence of President Mark Hopkins. "Preaching was a vent," said Rhodes,² "for the overflow of his energies and activity. In preaching, he had a greater range of thought than in the school-room. The effect upon him of two years at the feet of that great teacher, Mark Hopkins, was very marked. His thought ranged through wider circles. Whilst the dogmas of the church at Williamstown did not seem to

¹ *President Garfield and Education*, p. 74.

² *Ibid.*, p. 127.

have attached themselves strongly, the philosophic and metaphysical methods of President Hopkins became a part of his own methods. The result of this was that his preaching had a new charm for the people who heard him."

"No doubt," concludes Hinsdale, "he would have achieved high distinction as a preacher, but he did not feel that he had the inward vocation for the work. His genius drew him to the State by its very bent. Ceasing to preach at the same time that he ceased to teach (save an occasional later discourse), his preaching had been not only the source of much good to others, but a source of great strength to him, both as a man and as a public servant."¹

As for his teaching, when one remembers that he was still very young when he left the school in 1861,—less than thirty,—it is striking to find what high tributes were paid to his ability and influence. In a memorial volume, edited by his successor in the principalship, are numerous enthusiastic descriptions by former pupils of his educational power. To begin with, he taught nearly every subject in the school curriculum; classes in "classics and mathematics, history, philosophy, criticism, English literature, rhetoric, English analysis, and geology." Among these, his class in English analysis was perhaps the special favorite. "Probably no other of his classes," wrote Hinsdale, "is today remembered with equal interest by so many persons. Then his geology class, which recited at five o'clock in the morning, cannot be forgotten by a single surviving member."²

As to the kind of teaching he himself gave, Hinsdale and Everest, in the *Hiram Memorial*, dwell particularly upon his power of inspiring and stimulating. "A critic might have said," remarks Hinsdale, "that he did too much himself, that he did not so much excel as a drill-master and a disciplinarian. But, if his regimen was somewhat deficient in the forces that *push* the student, it was strong in the forces that *draw* him. . . . He sought to energize or vitalize him. He stimulated thought, created the habit of observation and reflection, aroused courage, widened the field of mental vision, and

¹ Hinsdale, *President Garfield and Education*, p. 74.

² *Ibid.*, p. 52.

furnished inspiration in unlimited measure." As Everest put it:¹ "He gave more attention to the boy than to the book. He strove to develop the student, not the lesson or science. He was abundant in praise of success, but sparing of blame. He inspired his students with a spirit of investigation and conquest."

"To many who are here today," said Rhodes at the memorial meeting of 1881, "visions come again of Garfield in the class-room or the chapel at Hiram. They see a fair-faced, blue-eyed young man, in the robust vigor of early manhood, overflowing with animal spirits and breezy, cheerful good-nature, standing before a class and irradiating the room with his grand enthusiasms for knowledge and ideas which made each pupil feel as if he were in an atmosphere highly electrified, out of which he passed feeling that life had a new meaning for him, and longing for the return of the next lesson."²

A great many outlines for his school talks or lectures exist among Garfield's papers, just such an orderly array of headings, with a few items under each, as a practiced speaker uses as a basis for extempore addresses. He gave practical advice at the opening of the school year. August 31, 1856, it was on "Temptations." The next year it was on "College Opportunities." In 1857 he gave five "Private Lectures to Gentlemen," filled with sane and wholesome observations. Some of his school lectures were written out, chiefly those which he used again in other places. In 1856 and 1857 these were either on school matters,—school government, the district school,—or on general literary topics,—Walter Scott, Germany, characteristics of modern literature; but, after the Denton debate, they were concerned with geology and religion, unity of the human race, physical geography, and the like.

Under Garfield, the general character of the school continued unaltered in essentials. The same festivals, societies and customs went on. The annual "Colloquy" at Commencement, written by Miss Booth with the assistance of Garfield

¹ Hinsdale, *President Garfield and Education*, p. 53.

² *Ibid.*, p. 125.

and others, still satisfied the dramatic appetites of the simple community. In his memorial address on Miss Booth in 1876, Garfield ran through the list of these original dramas, commenting on them with humor and appreciation. "Lafayette" in 1856; "Ivanhoe" in 1857; "The Conspiracy of Orsini" in 1858, "in which Elias A. Ford trod the stage as Louis Napoleon, with Electa Beecher as Empress, and Amzi Atwater as Prime minister, while White and Chamberlain were treacherously seeking his imperial life"; "The Highland Chiefs" in 1859; "Pickwickian Politics" in 1860; and "Zenobia" in 1861. "In all these pieces," he said, "the parts which were surest to touch the heart and win approval were those written by Miss Booth." And elsewhere he observed, "To her marked success . . . is due the fact that an original drama,—or, in the school dialect, a colloquy—was the most attractive feature of Commencement days."¹

But beyond and above all Garfield's intellectual influence was his personal hold upon his students, arising from his own profound sympathy and affection for the young people and his strong sense of justice. "Garfield's great tender heart, his all-embracing sympathy, his nice delicacy of feeling, his quick appreciation of everything ethically good or spiritually beautiful will be remembered farther and longer than his powerful logical faculties or his ample knowledge," wrote Hinsdale.² "He called out the demonstrativeness and affections of men in a way almost unprecedented. To him, the phlegmatic would stir; the cold, warm; the icy, melt. When he put his great brotherly arm around a discouraged or fainting boy, poor, homesick, or blind to the way before him, the boy very likely shed tears but somehow the mists began to clear away from his vision and his heart grew strong." This quality makes slight appearance in Garfield's journal, but it may be inferred from the strongly affectionate letters he wrote to many old pupils and many Hiram friends of both sexes.

The disciplinary and administrative side of school management was, on the other hand, fairly manifest in the day-

¹ Hinsdale, *President Garfield and Education*, p. 398.

² *Ibid.*, p. 58.

by-day entries. "He had nothing of the regulation school-master about him," said Hinsdale,¹ "and he put red tape to small use. He never spent his force on small things. He always had a code of printed rules; he exacted weekly reports of conduct; but his own personality was worth far more than both rules and reports. The Principal's hand was as firm as his heart was tender." He never scolded but "on due occasion, he could be exceedingly severe." "He had unusual power in controlling and influencing bad boys. He did not always make them good; far from it; but he had so much heart and nature, was so free from cant and affectation, that rough fellows who despised a religious profession respected and loved him. Many a boy was thus inclined to goodness whom austerity and pretension would have driven to evil." Further, "he advised and sometimes expostulated with parents. He took great pleasure in 'capturing boys,' as he called it and more than one was saved to himself and to the world by his friendly mediation."²

On Garfield's relations with his fellow teachers, much has been shown by his letters and extracts from his journals. Strong as was his tendency to like people, he held to a high standard in estimating those of his own profession, and expressed at one time his dissatisfaction with Hayden's too great preoccupation in preaching and with Dunshee's "stolidity." But he evidently liked Hayden as a man and respected Dunshee as a classical scholar. When he was openly attacked by Everest, he showed annoyance but no rancor and was content to keep him as his colleague indefinitely. On the whole, he valued highly the Eclectic teachers. "I know," he said in his Booth address, 1876,³ "how apt we are to exaggerate the merits of those we love, but, making due allowance for this tendency, as I look back upon the little circle of teachers who labored here under the leadership of our honored and venerable friend, Mr. Hayden, during the first six years of the Eclectic, and upon the younger group, associated with me from 1856 until the breaking out of the

¹ Hinsdale, *President Garfield and Education*, p. 65.

² *Ibid.*, p. 66.

³ *Works of James A. Garfield*, Vol. II, p. 309.

war, I think I wrong no one by saying, that, for generous friendship and united, earnest work, I have never seen and never expect to see their like again."

As for the influence of these years upon Garfield himself, we find the important judgment of his lifelong intimate friend, pupil and critic, B. A. Hinsdale, in his brief and modest but pithy essay. "Too much prominence," he wrote,¹ "cannot be given to the fact that General Garfield taught all his life. Nor is it easy to over-estimate the influence of his teacher-life upon his whole public career. No doubt, he would have taken a strong interest in public education had he never taught; but his experience as a teacher greatly widened and deepened his interest. Besides that, experience profoundly influenced his manner of thought and discussion. To instruct his hearers, to throw light upon his subject was always his supreme ambition in public speaking. An old Hiram student who often heard him speak on the stump once said, 'The General never succeeds so well in dealing with an audience as when he handles it just as he handled his class.'"

¹ *President Garfield and Education*, p. 70.

CHAPTER V
FIRST STEPS IN POLITICS, THE OHIO SENATE
1859-1861

EVERY change in Garfield's course of life was the result of a period of mental incubation and reflection. The quotations already given from his letters to Rhodes show that in 1858-1859 he was seriously considering the possibility of entering politics, with the Hiram school as a sort of base of action. He had taken part in several election campaigns; he had made a name for himself in the vicinity by his contest with Denton, and undoubtedly felt attracted by the idea of trying his powers in the legislature. By the end of the spring the subject was being discussed among sundry Disciples who were also politicians and, as his letter of June 20, quoted earlier, shows, he felt sure he could get the nomination. On the other hand, some of the more conservative "Brethren" heard the rumors with disapproval. In a warning letter, W. J. Ford, financial agent of the Eclectic, said (July 16), "Your best friends in Christ all shake their heads when you are named in connection with law or politics."

Shortly after the opening of the fall term of the Eclectic, the matter was pushed to a definite decision, the initiative coming from a group in Ravenna, the chief town in Portage County. So important did Garfield think this matter, and so anxious was he to put on record his own abstention from electioneering, that he wrote a full account in his journal from which the following extracts are taken.

"Dr. Squires came . . . to tell me that leading citizens of Ravenna had requested me to allow my name to be put in nomination. I came to Hiram and, during the week, conversed with the teachers and some of the Trustees and found it to be compatible with my duties to be absent the required time, and went to Ravenna and after examining into the

state of affairs allowed my name to be used. In entering upon this work I told my friends, first, I should make no pledge to any man or any measures; second, I should not work for my own nomination, other than to let my friends know my name was up; third, I ran at their instance, not mine." Then he added these words, "I will now say to you, my much neglected journal, that I have for some years had it in contemplation to enter the field of statesmanship, either at the legal or educational portal, and if this plan succeeds, I shall have gained a step in the direction of my purpose."

Garfield attended the convention on August 23 but recorded, "I solicited no man of all the delegates to vote for me." All the candidates being from Portage County, the delegates from that part of the district met in preliminary caucus and Garfield, after leading from the start, was selected on the fourth ballot. The Summit County delegates then accepted this decision and the convention nominated him for state senator by acclamation. "I am aware," he reflected in the journal, "that I launch out upon a fickle current and am about undertaking a work . . . of which a writer has said, 'It is the most seductive and dangerous which a young man can follow.'"

The step once taken, Garfield plunged into the work of the campaign with vigor, entering upon a long series of stump speeches. Beside the general issue of Republican against Democrat on the state ticket, there was a special issue in the Western Reserve counties growing out of an exciting legal controversy that had arisen during the preceding two years. In their antagonism to the fugitive slave law, the people of Oberlin had violently rescued a fugitive from the hands of slave catchers, whereupon two of the "rescuers" were indicted in 1859 and convicted of having violated the hated statute. An effort was made meanwhile to induce the State Supreme Court to interpose and free the "rescuers" on the ground that the fugitive slave law was unconstitutional, but a Republican member of the court, Judge Swan, joined with the Democratic members to make a majority against any such rash step. In the intensity of

antislavery feeling, Judge Swan was refused a renomination and an attempt was made by some to test the orthodoxy of all Republican candidates by requiring them to condemn the judge's action. So, at the very outset of his career, Garfield had to meet this challenge. His response was very significant.

In a public letter of September 12 he took ground regarding the representative's functions from which he never varied all his life. He was not pledged, he said, to any men or measures, but "shall, if elected hold myself free to pursue any line of state legislation which my own judgment, aided by the advice of my constituents, may dictate." Further, as to the precise issue, he said flatly, "If Judge Swan were to follow the precedents of the Federal and State courts, he could not have decided differently." The result of this letter, aided by the suspicions stirred up by the Dunshee affair at Hiram, was to make a good many extreme abolitionists, the "hot element" as Garfield had called them, regard him as insufficiently antislavery; a charge which was to this extent true, that he refused, in the heat of political excitement, to let his feelings override his respect for legality.

In a long entry in the journal on the day of the execution of John Brown, December 2, he gave another illustration of this same temper. "A dark day for our country. I have no language to express the conflict of emotion in my heart. I do not justify his acts. By no means. But I do accord to him, and I think every man must, honesty of purpose and sincerity of heart." After reviewing at length all the qualities of heart and soul which commanded respect, and all the courageous fortitude of bearing he displayed in the face of death, with the circumstances calculated to stir pity and admiration, he concluded: "When I remember all this, it seems as though God's warning angel would sound the words of a patriot of other and better days,—the words, 'I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just and his justice will not always slumber.' Brave man, Old Hero, Farewell! Your death shall be the dawn of a better day."

In opening his campaign, Garfield had a somewhat nerve-testing experience. "Aug. 30. Took the cars for Akron where

I . . . was introduced to Governor Chase and listened to his speech of two and three-quarters hours, after which I spoke about twenty minutes." After the election, Garfield summed up his efforts in a letter to Fuller (November 9): "During the campaign, I delivered some thirty political speeches averaging about two hours each. The Democrats and a few envious Republicans made me the centre of attack and so papers and stumpers were active in secret and open slander and abuse. I returned the fire with interest." This was no overstatement, as extracts from the Portage and Summit papers indicate. "The result was," continued Garfield, "that I had 1,430 majority in the two counties [Summit and Portage], it being 130 more votes than Governor Dennison obtained in the same territory." The vote in the senatorial district was as follows: Garfield, 5,176; Udall, 3,746.

It is to be noticed that Garfield's entrance into politics took place in an individualistic manner and with almost no reference to party matters, strictly so-called. He hardly mentioned the word "Republican" in his journal or letters and showed no sense of any assumption of membership in any organization. He thoroughly enjoyed the speaking, that is clear, but he had hardly acquired any trace of partisanship or of interest in the mechanism of party activity.

With this nomination and campaign, Garfield entered the field that was later to become his lifework, that of politics and legislation. But at the time, this step was not regarded by him as in any way involving a break with the past or with the Eclectic. He continued to think of himself as primarily the principal of the school, earning his living by teaching, who, for a few months of the year, left his academic duties to represent the two counties of Summit and Portage in the legislature. It was true that the public duties tended to absorb his interests at the expense of the other side, but he continued to cling to the school and to the old-time Hiram life long beyond the point where other men might have broken loose, surrendering them only under the pressure of an overwhelming sense of higher duty in 1861.

When Garfield went to the Ohio Senate in January, 1860, he entered a world where none of his controlling interests

played a large part; where neither religion nor education nor literary power counted for anything and oratory did not count for very much. To his family and to many of his more denominational neighbors it seemed a hazardous experiment. When he parted from his mother, he said, "I left her crying and thinking I would get into some calamitous condition before the winter is over." (December 31, 1859.) But his letters show with what keenness and quickness his mind apprehended each new impression and how rapidly he began the process of learning a wholly new technique.

At the very outset he had the good fortune to fall in with powerful political friends. "We are boarding with Mr Bascom," he reported (December 31), "the chairman of the Central Republican Committee of the State. It is not a boarding-house but he takes us in for company. It is only two squares from the State House. Mr. Cox and I occupy the same room and bed. Governor Dennison congratulated us and we congratulate ourselves on our good fortune." The cramped quarters were hardly to be envied, but the situation, from a political point of view, was most advantageous.

At the opening of the legislature Garfield sent home letters strongly suggesting his first reports from Williamstown in the summer of 1854 when he was "sizing up" his future classmates and competitors. "I have been cautiously . . . sounding some of the men with whom I come in contact," he told Rhodes (January 1). "I have seen most of the Republican Senators. They are not as gods. Yet I think some of them are strong men. The editors say it is a stronger cast of characters than usually appears on the Senatorial stage." But when he called on Governor Chase, his comment reveals no such reverence as he paid to Mark Hopkins. "Yesterday I called on Gov. Chase. He remembered me from our Akron meeting and received me very cordially and read part of his farewell message and asked me to make any suggestions. I took his offer as if it were a matter of course and said what I had to say. When I came away, he shook my hand warmly and spoke very kindly. *He is a candidate for the U. S. Senate.* Is the last sentence ungenerous? I somewhat suspect it is."

Garfield's maiden speech was made on a minor point, but one touching his personal ideals, when a proposal was pending to repeal the clause of the school laws providing for school libraries. He spoke earnestly in reply to Judge Key, the leading Democrat, calling the libraries "the soul of the school system," but the cry of "hard times" and "retrenchment" defeated him.¹ He was undoubtedly ambitious, however, for a chance to speak on some more conspicuous issue, and the opportunity was not long delayed, for feeling was strong not only between Republicans and Democrats, but between the two wings of the Republican majority. Opposed to the aggressively antisouthern and antislavery members from the Western Reserve, stood a strong group of former "Old Line Whigs" from the southern part of the state, who were entirely for compromise and conciliation on slavery questions. K. A. Harrison, the acknowledged spokesman of the conservatives, made a bid for the lead by introducing, early in the session, a "bill to prohibit military enterprises in Ohio," aiming to prevent anything similar to the John Brown raid. "The irrepressible conflict is upon us," wrote Garfield to Rhodes (January 8). "Mr. Harrison's bill . . . will come up for final passage or rejection tomorrow. I am this afternoon making the outline of a speech against it. I may not speak—indeed I shall not, unless one or two men whom I have in my eye speak in its favor." The next day he added some further comments on legislative action. "I am getting hold of the movement and begin to feel the pressure of the legislative armor." Somewhat later he remarked that he was "gathering in practical wisdom at a rapid rate. It is sometimes a critical matter to decide upon a vote, which way to cast it. I think it is quite a safe place, personally considered, to be *on the negative and in the minority*. Think of that, please."

Suddenly the opportunity for which he was waiting rose before him and he seized it, precisely as he had seized the occasion to annihilate Edwards in the Philologian meeting in November, 1854. He described it to Rhodes (January 21):

¹ *Ohio State Journal*.

"This forenoon closed with the most exciting time we have yet had and I have taken a position [which] will do me either a great deal of good or a good deal of harm. Governor Dennison received a message from Cincinnati last evening saying that the Governors and Legislatures of Kentucky and Tennessee would be in that city next Thursday. This morning a Joint Resolution passed the House and was sent to the Senate for its concurrence. The resolution provided, first, to empower the Governor to invite those legislatures to visit us; second, to appoint a committee to escort them from Cincinnati to this place; third, to recommend to the finance committee to draft a bill appropriating \$5,000 for the expenses of the visit. A debate arose on the matter,—Harrison, Jones, Ready and a few others opposing the whole resolution. There was a good deal of feeling on both sides.

"When the debate had continued half an hour and one of those critical periods came when all is confused, I made a speech of ten or fifteen minutes' length. The lobby had become quite full. I spoke much freer and better than I have before since I came here. I had the close attention of the Senate and lobby and, when I was through, four or five Senators came to me and congratulated me. Even Jones, the man against whom I spoke in caucus, came and said, 'Garfield, you have made a fine speech, but I don't agree with you.' The resolution passed and I am told that the Lt. Governor is going to appoint me chairman of the committee to meet them. The meeting of the legislatures will be an event which never before happened. How the country will regard it, I cannot tell. In moments like this we must decide in two minutes and our names stand on the record forever. I would rather act wrong than dodge as some do."

It is worth while to quote this in full, since it shows, in germ, the qualities which were to make Garfield in time the leader of his party in the House of Representatives through four sessions—the sense of a situation, the increased power of thought and utterance under excitement, the desire to be consistent in any policy advocated, the choice of the right moment to make an argument. But it also shows his political inexperience as well as a certain sentimentality in that the

question on which he chose to make his stroke for leadership was a somewhat showy side issue. He still went at things very much as though he were contending in his literary society against the Greek letter fraternity men. He was yet to learn that real legislative leadership was not primarily a matter of timely and effective speech-making but something to be won by mastery of all forms of legislative procedure and the capacity to work with all sorts of legislative colleagues.

The next day, January 22, Garfield reported to Hinsdale his impressions of legislative life. "Having the disadvantage of not being a lawyer, I have been obliged to study many things with which other members are well acquainted. . . . In the legislature the elements of the Literary Society, the Church, the popular assembly, the R. R. or Bank stockholders' meeting and the court are all strangely mingled. It calls upon a man to have all his sense and balance about him and ready for immediate use. . . . Our work has thus far been chiefly preliminary; still, there has been some skirmishing. Men are yet shy of each other, are taking each other's measures. There will be grappling by and by."

Garfield wrote home describing in full his journey to Louisville to present the invitation of the Ohio legislature to the assembled legislatures of Kentucky and Tennessee. Writing from the hotel after his arrival, he said (January 24): "Ever since we arrived, we have been receiving visits and still they are pouring in. They are astonished that Black Republicans should invite them to Ohio. But they are going." After describing how he was to present the formal invitation at a grand banquet, he went on: "I was never before in so critical a position. The fire-eaters of Tennessee will be there and yet every word I say will be read in Ohio. Our delegation is nervously anxious and there is any amount of general excitement." The next day, the young statesman of twenty-eight wrote of the banquet: "We had a very stirring time. The chivalry of the South seemed to do their utmost to give us a splendid feast. I hardly know how I did, but I found when Ohio was toasted I loved her more than I ever did before. The reporters will tell you what I said. My delegation were not ashamed of me, I believe."

His speech, as reported in the papers, was much of it conventional and flowery, with compliments to Clay and Jackson, as was to be expected, but his appeal for union was skillful and creditable. "Brethren," he said, "we have heard too long of the North and the South. But there is a third voice to be heard ere long; I hope and believe the day is not far distant when the great West shall speak and her voice shall be heard from sea to sea. In that voice shall mingle no tones of doubt or uncertainty, no note of disunion shall be heard in that utterance. For while this mighty river bears on its bosom the wealth of this great valley, so long must this circle of states be undivided, the bonds of Union unbroken."

The visit to Ohio was carried out according to the plan, but Garfield made no more speeches. From this spectacular sort of politics he had to drop back into the routine work of legislation, and to undergo, at the same time, no little criticism from the radical antislavery men of the Western Reserve for what they felt to be his unnecessary civility to slaveholders. He bore this as philosophically as he could and finished out the session with the usual final rush to take up and pass pending bills. "As the session draws to a close," he wrote (March 14), "our business becomes more laborious. Events crowd upon each other very rapidly and it requires all of one's energies to keep the run of business and act intelligently. I shall be glad when the week is ended."

In this session Garfield made several political acquaintances destined to last for many years. Such were James Monroe, a professor of Oberlin College and a leader of Western Reserve antislavery sentiment, and John Q. Smith from Clinton County, both of the Senate; Peter Hitchcock, Joseph Bruff and Richard C. Parsons of the House, future political friends and neighbors. But more important than any of these was Jacob D. Cox, his roommate at Bascom's, senator from the district next to the eastward from Garfield's. To Austin, who lived in Cox's town, Warren, he wrote (February 5): "I find Mr. Cox very much of a man, though I could wish that he were a little more demonstrative. I think that both he and myself are occasionally visited with

that impulse which men call Ambition. I don't really know how he feels toward me, but I am inclined to think our association here is mutually agreeable and beneficial." Garfield had hitherto had for friends chiefly men and women who vowed eternal friendship and declared their affection in every letter. In Cox, he met a friend of a new kind, a man of strength and balance, cool yet kindly.

The impression produced by Garfield upon Cox at this time was described by the latter some years later: "His vigorous impulsive nature, full of animal spirits, had strong sympathy with the joyous and even boisterous. His perception of the humorous was quick and his love for it strong. He was demonstrative and active in all his ways. Big and strong, he was apt to show his liking for a friend when walking with him by grasping him with a hug that would almost make his ribs crack, and his hearty roar over a bit of fun or a comic passage in an author would be emphasized by a grip like a vise upon your arm while he would shake you up to his own key of enjoyment in the thing that pleased him."¹

Just what Garfield himself thought of his first legislative winter cannot be said, for he has left no self-judgment in any journal or letter. One may guess that oratory and forensic debate loomed large in his view and that the comprehension of other aspects of legislative leadership was still in the future. A clipping from a newspaper of 1860 has this comment on him and his colleague, Cox: "Among the second-class members, if I may so call them,—not second class, however, in the sense of lacking ability, but only in experience and position among the other members,—rank prominently Garfield and Cox. Garfield wants experience only to become a leader; he impresses every one favorably and, as he ripens in Senatorial experience, his influence, even now weighty, will be more sensibly felt and acknowledged. Cox, by making a speech upon almost every subject that comes up for discussion, strives to keep before the public if he does not succeed in riding on the upper wave of senatorial influence."

¹ Cox, "Early Life of Garfield," in *Society of Army of Cumberland*, 1882, p. 96.

It is noteworthy that during and after this session the optimistic young senator felt little alarm over the secession talk constantly rising in the South. His Louisville speech, already quoted, deprecated the idea and an oration on the Fourth of July, in the summer of 1860, at Ravenna, reaffirmed his view. Years after, in Congress, in 1877, he referred to this speech as an illustration of the inability of men to foresee war. "I recollect that in my shortsighted weakness in 1860, I made an argument with all my strength to prove that rebellion against this government was impossible; that there were no men in America who would wish to break the Union." The speech, published in pamphlet form, was an oration in ornate style which dealt optimistically with the existing slavery question. "Does this conflict," he asked, "put in jeopardy your liberty or mine? Is the farmer on the prairie of the West or the pampas of the South threatened in the enjoyment of his life, liberty, or property? Has Maine, as a state, any quarrel with Alabama? No. The politicians of the various states are differing but this difference is not concerning the states themselves." He dwelt upon the essential unity of the interior valley. "Who," he asked, "can divide the mighty Mississippi and bid its waters flow back to their mountain springs?" And, finally, he queried: "Is there one of all these states that would break the bond of the Union and deprive itself of all the blessings which it affords, rather than have this territorial question settled contrary to its wish? Fellow-citizens, I believe there is not yet one. And, if there were one, would not the thirty-two remaining sisters throw their arms of affection around the erring one and bring her gently back again to the sacred circle of home?" All of which smacked of the Disciple preacher in spite of the experience gained in the legislative session.

On less formal occasions Garfield was capable of a very different sort of speech-making, as illustrated this same summer when he addressed a Republican rally at the "Wigwam" in Columbus after the meeting of the Republican state convention. This time there was no sentiment about gentle sisters, but a good roaring stump speech, which, said the *Ohio State Journal*, "enchained the audience . . . until out-

bursts of eloquence and terrible pictures of the Democratic party in its present pitiable condition caused the crowd to peal out applause that shook the Wigwam with Republican thunder." The *Cincinnati Commercial* remarked, "The young Senator from Portage—for he is not yet thirty—stepped at once from comparative obscurity into genuine popularity as a political speaker on that occasion, and, from this time to the end of the campaign, his party will demand his services on the stump."

Garfield's journal and letters show that the last prediction was accurately fulfilled. From August to November he was engrossed in the campaign, addressing Republican meetings in his own senatorial district and its neighborhood. The journal records fifty speeches in some forty communities. At the height of the campaigning, he wrote a letter to Fuller (October 3) which shows the intense enjoyment he found in his new career of political speaking. "You can hardly imagine in what a whirlpool of excitement and work my life is passing. I had the good—or bad—fortune to make a speech at the State Convention in Columbus in July which was somewhat applauded throughout the state so much so, at least, as to overwhelm me with calls for speeches. I have made more than forty within the last two months and have refused more than that number of calls. The times of 1840 are being re-enacted here. I have this morning returned from a trip to Akron, Summit County, and tomorrow I leave for Columbus."¹

A clipping from some newspaper shows the preacher-politician making happy use of a biblical analogy in a stump speech at Chardon, assailing Douglas's slavery doctrines. "His account of the origin of squatter sovereignty was very happy and occasioned much laughter. He said that when our first parents were placed in the Garden of Eden and forbidden to partake of the fruit of a certain tree, they were subject to intervention; but that a Squatter Sovereign, by inducing them to believe that they had a right to partake of the forbidden fruit if they saw fit, caused their expulsion

¹ Fuller, *Reminiscences of J. A. Garfield*, p. 294.

from that beautiful garden. It was then and there that Squatter Sovereignty had its origin." On November 6 the journal says: "Voted for Lincoln and Hamlin. Went to Ravenna in evening; at midnight knew that L. and H. were elected. God be praised!"

By the time that Garfield's second session opened, earth-shaking events had taken place—the secession of South Carolina, the agitation in the cotton states, the practical abdication of all responsibility by the Buchanan administration, the outburst of a babel of excitement in northern newspapers and, above all, a vociferous demand for compromise. Already Congress had begun the effort to find some way to prevent the dissolution of the Union by the appointment of compromise committees. No letter of Garfield's has been preserved that shows in any way the impression produced upon him by these events, but from his letters home after the opening of the Ohio Senate, it is clear that he had been swung completely away from his earlier optimism and confidence and was now not only opposed to any compromise but was ready to fight, if necessary.

A letter to his wife (January 13) shows his mood. "Yesterday we had a very exciting day. We had managed to keep out Union-saving resolutions till on Thursday evening the Republicans of both Houses held a general caucus, and, after a whole evening spent in debate, a committee was appointed to present resolutions. We drafted them and had Harrison present them. I think we shall soon pass a law to arm the state. There is a strong warlike sentiment here. The members have formed a company of forty for military drill. So, I expect in a few days, Cox and I will be seen on the East portico of the State House learning the use of the light infantry musket."

A long letter to Hinsdale (January 15) shows that he clearly expected war. "I do not see any way, this side a miracle of God's, which can avoid war, civil war, with all its attendant horrors. Peaceable dissolution is utterly impossible. Indeed, I cannot say that I would wish it were possible. To make the concessions demanded by the South would be hypocritical and sinful. They would be neither obeyed nor

respected. All that is left for us as a state or as a company of Northern states is to arm and prepare to defend ourselves and the federal government. Meanwhile what will be the influence of the time on individuals? It may be the duty of our young men to join the army or they may be drafted without their own consent. I believe the times will be even more favorable than calm ones for the formation of strong and forcible characters. Just at this time (have you observed the fact?) we have no man who has power to ride on the storm and direct it. The hour has come but not the man. The crisis will make many such. But I do not love to speculate on so painful a theme."

By the end of January Garfield reported that the members of his way of thinking were finding it difficult to control the situation, owing to the paralysis of the federal administration, and the inability of Congress to prevent the spread of secession. What made it harder for Garfield was that his fellow fighter, Cox, was called away by his wife's illness, since which, Garfield told Rhodes (January 26), "the burden of defending decided Republican measures has fallen more than usually heavy on my shoulders. For the last three days, I have done little else [than] meet committees, write reports, and speak against the coalitions of Democrats and 'emasculated Republicans.' The strong tendency to concession and union-saving has given Harrison & Company a hope of gaining the leadership . . . and we are expecting a *coup d'etat* from them soon. I am resolved to fight those fellows to the bitter end. I hope and believe I am rather riding the storm than falling before it. I fear some of our decisive bold measures may be lost in the House by the nervousness of our timid men. In regard to the aspect of national affairs, I am really growing more cheerful and hopeful as the clouds thicken."

The proceedings of the Senate show that Garfield played a sturdy part against the compromisers. On January 11, when Key, the Democratic leader, advocated the repeal of the "Personal Liberty Law," Garfield took the opposite side. "Show me one word in contravention of the constitution and I will vote for its repeal though every man in the state is

against me," but, until he was so shown, he would not vote. On January 24, still debating against Key, he brushed aside Buchanan's assertion that a state could not be coerced. "No man of any party entertains such an idea. If by coercing a state they mean enforcing the laws upon one man or a thousand who disobey or resist the law, they are right, but if they mean absolutely 'coercion' of a sovereign state, they indulge in absurd abstraction." When Harrison moved a resolution to appoint delegates to the peace convention, Garfield moved that the commissioners be not appointed until after Lincoln's inauguration and "denounced the idea of compromise with armed rebels." Beaten in the vote, he was credited with defeating Harrison in debate. "The verdict of all parties was decidedly favorable to Garfield," ran the newspaper comment.

Garfield drew upon himself some attention and no little denunciation by introducing a bill to punish treason in Ohio against the laws of the state or the Union. This was, of course, more for the purpose of proclaiming union doctrines than anything else and it was particularly offensive therefore to the "Old Line Democrats," who fell foul of him in the press. He wrote of this: "You will probably remember an article in the '*Crisis*' I sent you in which that paper puts me through a severe course of discipline for bringing in a bill to punish treason. I have seen a number of Democratic papers that are making similar attacks, and sadly disparaging my reputation as a Lawyer!!! Isn't it mournful? The '*Cincinnati Enquirer*' thinks 'Mr. Garfield is evidently aiming at election to the Supreme bench' and, in the latter part of his article, very crushingly speaks of 'Chief Justice Garfield.' I have lately furnished some facts and arguments to the Editor of the *State Journal* and he has published them. I am also preparing a report on the same subject; I think the Dems will not make a great deal by this new pursuit." (Rhodes, February 18.)

Garfield's use of the press was not confined to this one instance, for he refers, on other occasions, to writing editorials. In fact, he was discovering that the opportunity for spectacular oratory was singularly slight; and, to reach the

public, he must adopt other methods. He remarked to Rhodes (February 18): "The character of the Senate is peculiar and there seems to be a special hatred toward set speeches. Our conflicts are a sort of guerilla warfare, rather than a system of pitched battles. Not more than two or three speeches of fifty minutes' length have been made last winter or this."

A visit of Lincoln, president-elect, to Columbus impressed Garfield with the oddity but apparent strength of the "rail-splitter." He wrote to his wife (February 17): "In some respects, I was disappointed in Lincoln but in most, he surpassed expectations. He has raised a pair of whiskers but, notwithstanding all their beautifying effects, he is distressingly homely. But through all his awkward homeliness, there is a look of transparent, genuine goodness which at once reaches your heart and makes you trust and love him. His visits are having a fine effect on the country. He has the tone and bearing of a fearless firm man and I have great hopes for the government. He stands higher on the whole in my estimation than ever." To Hinsdale he made similar comments, February 17, and added: "He clearly shows his want of culture and the marks of Western life. His remarkable good sense, simple and condensed style of expression and evident marks of indomitable will, give me great hopes of the country. . . . After the long dreary period of Buchanan's weakness and cowardly imbecility, the people will hail a strong and vigorous leader."

He was still ready for fighting. "I know it may be asked," he continued, in the same letter, "is it not better to dissolve before war than after? But I ask, is it not better to fight before dissolution than after? If the North and South cannot live in the Union without war, how can they live and expand as dissevered nations without it? May it not be an economy of bloodshed to tell the South that disunion is war and that the U. S. Government will protect its property and execute its laws at all hazards?"

This mood of defiant sternness began to fade away after Lincoln's inauguration when no new policy seemed to be forthcoming and the federal government merely stood still,

waiting. The first thing that disappointed Garfield was the outcome of the senatorial election to fill the vacancy caused by Chase's acceptance of the Treasury Department in Lincoln's cabinet. He was now an enthusiastic supporter of the candidacy of Governor Dennison. In the previous session Garfield had not been favorably impressed with the governor, but by this time his home letters show him in frequent consultation with him and indicate still more frequent domestic visiting. "They are a very pleasant family indeed," he wrote to his wife (January 19). "I think no member of the legislature is on more intimate terms with them than I. Personally, I like Gov. D. much better than Gov. Chase." He even went to an Episcopal church service with them and admitted that it had good points! "There is much in it which is exceedingly beautiful and impressive. As a system of impersonal Christianity it is, no doubt, very efficient." This friendship, destined to endure as long as Garfield lived, was the first of several such with older men who were attracted by his personality, and it was of both personal and political advantage.

Writing home, March 19, he reported: "The excitement in regard to the election of a senator is intense. Cox and I have espoused the cause of Gov. Dennison and are bending all our energies to secure his election. Three successive nights I hardly slept at all. Two of them I did not even go to bed. The city is thronged with public men. The venerable Thomas Ewing is here, also John Sherman, Robert Schenck, and crowds of other celebrities."

In hopes of using the press to aid his cause, Garfield sent to the editor of the Cleveland *Leader* a draft for an editorial with an accompanying letter, giving reasons for the election of Dennison, which show that he had progressed very rapidly in acquiring a knowledge of party politics. The chief candidates beside Dennison were Sherman and Schenck, but Dennison had led them both for forty-nine ballots. What Garfield urged was that the *Leader* throw its influence for Dennison rather than Sherman, since the latter was from the same part of the state as Wade, the other senator, which would endanger the latter's chances for reelection two years

later, it being regarded as unfair to have both senators from the same region.

When the contest ended in the success of Sherman over both his competitors, Garfield took what comfort he could in feeling that he had made a good political fight, even if unsuccessful. "Well, we have been beaten in the Senatorial contest," he wrote to his wife (March 24). "But those who beat us did it by numbers rather than by generalship. I appreciate all you say in regard to political contests and I am glad to assure you that our advocacy of Gov. Dennison was acknowledged on all hands to have been *honorable* as well as *able*. Indeed, we should have succeeded had there not been a general feeling that Kirk [the Lieutenant-Governor] would have been a poor substitute for Governor."

After this there descended upon Garfield a mood of depression and uncertainty, owing to the passiveness of the federal administration and the resulting paralysis of all strength or initiative in the Ohio legislature. His letters, after a few despairing comments on the weakness of Lincoln's policy, relate more and more to his own personal problems, to the fortunes of the school and, above all, to his doubts as to his own future course. "The news from Washington is very gloomy and humiliating. It does seem to me very mortifying to our national pride to have Gen. Scott talking of 'military necessity' in regard to Fort Sumter.

I have no doubt that plenty of young men in the American navy would be glad to undertake the reinforcement of Anderson. If Scott were thirty years younger we should not hear of this 'military necessity.' I hope the Administration will take some course before long that will give the people a chance of admiring pluck once more." (March 23.)

A letter to his wife, March 10, shows his reversion to personal problems. "I am very anxious to get through and be in the school again. I greatly fear it will be small. I care far more about the name of having a small school than the lack of money. To stay involves many unpleasant consequences and yet it is very hard to break away from all the associations of the Eclectic. I am not at all sure that the profes-

sion of law will suit my nature and taste. I may loathe its weary details and long again for a work which has more to do with the good of others and with the unselfish side of life. If hesitation to make a decision is a mark of an inferior mind, then I am indeed inferior."

The end of the month came and still the government at Washington marked time and the legislature at Columbus dealt with routine. Garfield's depression reached its lowest depths in these days, especially when he went fruitlessly to several places in central Ohio in hopes of helping his old friend, Corydon Fuller, to secure a newspaper position or to purchase a paper. All the time he pondered on his own future. "There are moments," he wrote to his wife (April 7), "when a weariness of all public life comes over me with wonderful power and I long for a happy secluded home with a small circle of friends around me and the great world shut out." But he immediately added: "I know my restless nature so well that this picture brings no permanent joy, for, were I possessed of it, I should straightway sigh for the fiercer activities of life. . . . Do you suppose *real strong men* have such waverings?"

No more striking example could be found of the strength of the hold which Garfield's religious and neighborhood interests had upon him than his inability, even in this time of crisis, to tear himself free. This tenacity was both his strength and his weakness. Ever since his election to the Senate, he had continued to be the principal of the Eclectic, teaching vigorously part of every term, supervising the classes and devoting much thought to school problems during his absences. His journals and letters show that he kept in touch with things by means of occasional visits, lectures and sermons and constant correspondence with Rhodes, who acted as head during legislative sessions. At the same time his preaching interests were unabated and his correspondence with Austin and others shows him assiduous in attendance upon yearly meetings and denominational matters. And from Columbus he hastened back at the end of the session to find comfort and companionship in the group of Eclectic teachers gathered about his young family.

It is in this little group that Garfield's real social life existed from 1856 to 1861. His marriage made no real difference, for he continued to live in close association with Rhodes, Miss Booth and the others, taking them all in as members of one family. Even the birth of his first child on July 3, 1860, did not at first seem more than an episode in this group existence. Garfield's letters home from Columbus show that the arrival of the little girl, named Eliza after her grandmother, but always called "Trot," called forth a new tenderness and solicitude in him and began the process of his education in parental duties, but it did not interfere with his constant journeyings to preach in Disciple churches, or even with a long trip on the Great Lakes in the summer of 1860. The school, the Disciples denomination, the Hiram circle—these still circumscribed his habits, even though the idea of striking out in new directions kept recurring. Hampered by the very strength of his affections and the tenacity of his early associations, he had not yet learned, even after two sessions in the Ohio Senate, how to think and act on a broad stage.

It was the news of April 12, that the Confederates had opened fire on Fort Sumter, that broke into his mood of uncertainty and supplied the emotional shock necessary before he could break away from his habitual life. Writing to his wife (April 13) Garfield pictured himself sitting in the Senate chamber in "terrible excitement and suspense," listening to the dispatches reporting the fort in flames. "The reflection is so very terrible," he wrote, "that Maj. Anderson has been kept there for three months with his hands tied while nineteen tremendous batteries have been erected and brought to bear upon him." The next morning he continued: "Cox and I have just returned from the Governor's office where we were called for consultation. The dispatches show that Anderson has surrendered. The probability is that Ohio will be called upon for men and money and the Governor has shown us a draft of his message. We meet again at three p.m. We shall ask for a state loan of half a million, I think."

The long suspense and doubt were now swept away in a tempest of patriotic excitement which for the moment swept

Garfield's doubts resistlessly before it. On April 15 came the formal call of the administration for 75,000 militia,—virtually a call for volunteers, since little organized militia existed in the North—and the loyal states broke into a tempest of excitement and furious activity. Men rushed to arms, and rushed to do anything else they could think of which might aid the cause; every state official from governor down felt called upon to demonstrate his patriotism by his energy of language and by “doing something”; every editor, every “public man,” broke into vociferous rhetoric and, for the time being, abandoned the customary party formulas. For the moment everyone was “standing behind the President” and ready to devote his whole time and energy to saving the Union.

In the tide of emotion Garfield wrote to Rhodes (April 14): “I am glad we were defeated at Sumter. It will rouse the people. I can see no possible end to the war till the South is subjugated. Better lose a million men in battle than allow the government to be overthrown. The war will soon assume the shape of Slavery and Freedom. The world will understand it and I believe the final outcome will redound to the good of humanity. Cox and I have, within the last two weeks, seriously talked over the prospects of the country and the future of our own lives, and we have resolved, that, if it be necessary in order to rouse our people, we will raise companies and go with them into the army. I have no heart to think of anything but the country. If there be any hope in government or the cause of humanity, then justice, religion, and patriotism require [that] our people should stand by the federal government in every emergency.”

The Garfield who wrote these terse sentences under the stress of powerful emotion was a different person from the sentimental youth who, a few years before, had poured forth streams of rhetoric over sunsets, mountains, prairies and his own dubitations. For the moment he was shaken to the center of his being, and he spoke the direct language of passion, the passion of patriotism.

The next day he wrote to his wife: “I can see nothing before us but a long and sanguinary war. The wanton attack

on Sumter and the surrender of Major Anderson can result in nothing else than general war. When I see the outrageous meanness of the Democracy and the timid and cowardly course of many of the Republicans, it makes me long to be in the strife and help fight it out. . . . Cox and I are spending all our leisure time in reading military science and the campaigns of Napoleon and Wellington."

In the tumult of war fever and excitement, the legislature rushed through a series of emergency measures, in which Garfield played his part. On the fifteenth he reported the treason bill to the Senate and on the next day he assisted in carrying the so-called "Million bill" for raising and equipping the state militia. Writing on the seventeenth to Rhodes, Garfield said: "The all absorbing and intense excitement which fills this city and state and whole nation has no parallel in our history. It has swept everything before it. The million war bill had but one dissenting vote in the Senate, though Judge Key and I had a debate on it which inspired me more than I have been before moved. Today my treason bill, which has received the jeers of the Democrats and their Journals, passed the Senate with but eight dissenting votes." The reply to Key, who had denounced Lincoln's proclamation as "a declaration of war against seven sister states," is remarkable in that Garfield, under circumstances when almost any other man would have burst into a storm of personal invective, used a patriotic appeal on the highest grounds.¹

After casting his vote on that same day against a resolution to ratify the proposed Thirteenth Amendment which would guarantee the existence of slavery in the states, Garfield wrote the following letter to Governor Dennison: "I hereby tender to you my services for any position in the military organization of the State to which you may see fit to appoint me," but explained at the same time, in writing home (Rhodes, April 17), that this did not mean an irrevocable intention to enlist at once. "I have offered the Governor my services in any capacity he may see fit to appoint me. He may not require me to enter the army now—he may not at

¹ W. Reid, *Ohio in the War*, Vol. I, p. 744.

all. It is thought by some that a Brigadier-Generalship will be assigned to me but this is not probable. I have no doubt I shall go home next week and take my place in the school until the end of the term. Still, this may not be so. It will be important to keep the school as quiet and free from the general excitement as possible." In fact, it was several months before Garfield could bring himself to the point of decision. Meanwhile, he went through a succession of emotional crises, as his letters show.

Since the immediate task in the state was the raising of troops by voluntary enlistment, Governor Dennison at once utilized Garfield's power of public speaking by sending him to help raise two regiments, with the result that he became, perforce, a candidate for a colonelcy. Writing to his wife from Columbus, April 28, he said: "I reached here [from a home visit] Tuesday forenoon and on Thursday went to Cleveland to help organize two regiments. Returned Saturday morning. Cox has been appointed one of the Brigadier-Generals and leaves tomorrow morning at five o'clock to organize a camp. It now appears probable that I shall be elected Colonel of the Seventh Regiment now at Cleveland. If so, I shall probably be ordered into camp before the week is ended. If not, my military history will not begin just yet. The more I reflect on the whole subject, the more I feel that I cannot stand aloof from this conflict. My heart and hope for the country are in it and I could do no justice to the every day duties of life. . . . I am every day impressed with the character of the men who are going into the war. A few days ago there came a company from Ironton on the Ohio River. They were mostly members of a Methodist Church in that place. They were obliged to sleep on the marble floor of the rotunda. Before lying down for the night, they gathered into a corner and held a prayer meeting. Their officers led in prayer and they sang finely. One song was 'I'm glad I'm in this army.' Ungodly men who looked on were moved to tears, and one old fellow said to another who had made some slighting remark: 'I'll whip the first *damned man* that makes sport of them.' Such men will fight. . . . How has the war affected the school?"

Before this matter could be concluded, Garfield was sent by Dennison on a quasi diplomatic errand to the capital of Illinois. He wrote from Springfield (April 30): "I left Columbus yesterday and . . . find the whole West, so far as I can see, in Indiana and Illinois stirred to its depths on the subject of war. Beside taking home with me 5000 stands of arms, I am to open negotiations with the Governors of Illinois and Indiana with the design of obtaining permission of the general government to divide the forces of the Union into two grand armies—all East of the mountains . . . to take charge of Washington and the seacoast and another, to be called the army of the valley which shall take the whole line from Pittsburg to Cairo and shall open a way down the Mississippi. As there is but one Major-General west of the mountains and he is from Ohio (General G. B. McClellan), it will be a work of some difficulty to get the states of the valley to submit to the leadership of Ohio. I am to try my powers of diplomacy to effect this purpose. The members of the Illinois legislature are a strong, muscular, rough-looking set, but I like the bearing of the Governor. The colonelcy will probably be decided before I return. I fear my absence will affect it unfavorably." As to the purpose of the journey, Reid, in *Ohio in the War*,¹ says, a little sarcastically, "Glad to hear of an officer anywhere who knew anything about war, they joyfully assented and so McClellan's department was, with their full approval, presently extended from West Virginia to the Mississippi."

Garfield's forebodings about the colonelcy proved true. When he returned from Illinois with the rifles, he found not only that his chances seemed to have been injured but that his Hiram circle appeared to be alarmed lest he had done something unbecoming in aspiring to the position. In reply, he wrote to his wife (May 5):

"I returned from Springfield on Wednesday evening, having undressed myself only twice during a whole week. But before I detail any of my doings, I will vindicate myself from the mysterious suspicions which are giving my dear friends anxiety about me. In the first place, I do not feel

¹ Vol. I, p. 35.

about this matter as I do about ordinary offices. To seek a place of usefulness in the army seems to me rather meritorious than otherwise. When I hear that Ben Wade, John Sherman, A. G. Riddle, and other men of that character have enlisted in the ranks, I say it is done for buncombe and is an unmanly piece of demagogism. I know the time may come when it might be the duty [of] all men of every class to go into the ranks . . . but that time has not yet come. I looked the field over and thought I ought to have at least as high a position as a staff officer. My friends thought so likewise and generously offered to aid me in obtaining such a position. The Governor would have given me one still higher if he had had one in his gift. I went to Cleveland for two purposes; one, to see that the Reserve was fairly represented in the regiments to be formed. The Governor sent me for that. The other was to see whether I could honorably obtain the colonelcy. I accomplished the first, and, for the second, I met with favor from all the companies I saw. I would have been elected before now, but for my absence to Illinois. The Governor of his own accord delayed giving the order for the election till my return.

“While I was gone, Tyler of Ravenna whom I had aided in various ways and who had told me he would aid me in the election, turned in and offered himself as a candidate and by bargains and brandy got an informal ballot by which he was elected. But the regular election has not yet been held. I do not know how it will turn. I may not be elected, but I shall do all I can justly to secure his defeat, for he has acted treacherously. Several Cleveland men have been doing what they could for me. The Seventh Regiment will be here this afternoon. I shall, if for no other reason than to defeat Tyler, go before them as a candidate. My trip to Illinois was wholly on the Governor’s war business and was not only no part of my interest, but, if I fail, that trip will be the whole cause; for it gave T. a chance to say what he pleased and he was very unscrupulous.”

As soon as there was an office to be won by an election, the American habit of campaigning at once came into play and Garfield found himself savagely attacked by sundry

papers—notably the *Ravenna Sentinel*—and accused of all sorts of subterranean intriguing. The final result was the election of Tyler, 580 to 243.

This defeat and the accompanying newspaper abuse, as well as a tendency on the part of the Hiram people to believe that he had shown too great eagerness for a command, brought about on Garfield's part a sudden sharp revulsion from the warlike mood of April. He wondered whether it might not be his duty, after all, to stay at the Eclectic for the sake of the institution and of his family. He also felt seriously disturbed over the attacks that had been made on him in connection with the Seventh Ohio. "I really feel," he wrote to one correspondent (J. H. Clapp, June 15), "that my reputation in two or three counties is in danger and a set of unscrupulous men who want me out of the way are pushing the matter with all the strength they can command." The result was that, when Governor Dennison offered him the lieutenant-colonelcy of the Twenty-fourth Ohio, on June 8, he declined it, saying: "Such is the condition of my personal affairs and my relations to those with whom I am in business connections that I feel compelled to decline the place. This I do with great regret, but with the hope and belief that a few months may find me at liberty to follow the promptings of my heart and take any post to which the country may see fit to call me."

Garfield's feelings at this juncture appear in a letter to Hinsdale (July 12): "I hardly knew myself till the trial came how much of a struggle it would cost me to give up going into the army. I found I had so fully interested myself in the war that I hardly felt it possible for me not to be a part of the movement. But the consideration that there were so many who could fill the office tendered to me,—and would covet the place,—more than could do the work here, perhaps, that I could not but feel it would be to some extent a reckless disregard of the good of others to accept. If there had been a scarcity of volunteers, I should have accepted. The time may yet come when I shall feel it right and necessary to go but I thought, on the whole, that time had not yet come. I look forward to a separation from Hiram as an event filled

with much that is sad and trying. We are having a very pleasant quiet time here, Harry, Almeda and I. Harvey is coming back in the fall. I expect a small school."

For the time being, Garfield fell back into his old-time teaching and religious activity, conscious probably that it could not last, but none the less enjoying the temporary quiet. Instead of preaching sermons on the Union and lecturing to the school on artillery, as he had done in May, he utilized the well-worn subjects of "Church Government," "Simon Magus" or "The Disciple Reformation." When he gave a Fourth of July address at Burton, it was a philosophical analysis of the causes for secession from the point of view of an observer, rather than of a participant in war. He said in his letter to Hinsdale (July 12): "I spent nearly two weeks in constitutional readings. I read Curtis, the Federalist and parts of Hildreth and Bancroft and a few chapters again in DeTocqueville. The chief point I made in the speech at Burton was that Jeffersonianism was now fully tested and had proved a failure. The Kentucky and Virginia resolutions contained the germ of nullification and secession and we are today reaping the fruit. Hamilton was right in his main proposition." The contrast with the burning words of April was manifest.

Reverting for the moment to old-time habits, he paid a visit to Bethany, in which town he saw Alexander Campbell, now old and depressed. "The college closed nearly two months ago," he reported to Austin (June 28). "It is a deserted looking place, I assure you. Brother Campbell is for the Union, but his son, wife, and daughter sympathize with the South. It is sad to see a family so divided. Brother Campbell is getting very broken. He cannot last long, I fear. He frequently says, in a very mournful way, 'I shall never see peace in this country again.'" Later in the summer, he went on a boat trip with "Brother Austin and Brother Robison," visiting friends and remaining away from Hiram for two weeks. Among others, he visited the former Poestenkill friends, the Learneds, now living at Port Austin. So in the shadow of old-time sectarian interest and old-time friendships, he passed the first part of the summer.

But on returning to Hiram, he found opportunity again confronting him in the shape of a telegram from Governor Dennison. "July 28. I am organizing some new regiments. Can you take a Lieutenant-Colonelcy? I am anxious you should do so." Again the tide rose in Garfield's spirit and this time it rose high enough to tear him loose from all the restraining bonds of hesitation, love for the school and the Disciples life and comfort in the familiar round of small duties among which he had taken refuge. It was time to act. Bull Run had been fought, and the future showed a prolonged war. Congress had met and authorized a volunteer army and Lincoln had called for a million men to serve for three years. All the North was now to be engaged in the serious business of forming a real national army, to replace the three-months' militia, and carry out that "subjugation of the South" of which Garfield had talked in the previous spring. He wrote to the Governor at once: "Dear Sir. I have just returned from a trip of two weeks to the West and found your favor of the 28th ult. asking me to accept a Lieutenant Colonelcy awaiting me. I regret that I was not here at the time. I now write to inquire if the Lt. Colonelcies are all disposed of and, if not, to inquire at what time I should be needed to go into camp. If I should not be needed under two or three weeks, I hope I can accept the appointment. Will you also mention whether the Colonels are to be West Point men?" This last request, according to one of Garfield's biographers, was due to his desire to be associated with a trained officer.

Garfield did not, on second thoughts, ask to postpone entering the service, as suggested in his letter, but wrote to his wife, from Cleveland (August 14): "I have concluded to go. Shortly after I arrived, I went to the telegraph office and sent a dispatch to the Governor saying I was ready. If I get an answer tonight, I shall know certainly all about it. If not, I shall go to Columbus in the morning and stay if I am still wanted. I presume there is but little doubt but that I shall stay. So far as I am concerned, it is settled. Concerning my decision, you know how much of a question was before me. The only new view since I left home was the bad

news from Missouri and the slowness with which recruits come in." The rest of the letter and another, the following morning, concerned the arrangement of their domestic affairs. To his mother he wrote with equal simplicity: "After thinking it over fully, I have concluded I ought to go. I hope you will agree with me and will feel that it is all right."

In these quiet, restrained letters, another man was writing than the fluent and rhapsodical Williams undergraduate or the expansive Disciple preacher and correspondent. When the time came for the great decision, he announced it in the simple words with which the heroic is always associated. And so, without knowing it, he brought to an end the formative part of his career and embarked on the path that was to lead him far from the simple and secluded life of the small Ohio town and the narrow range of a religious sect.

CHAPTER VI
THE CIVIL WAR, COLONEL OF THE
FORTY-SECOND OHIO

1861-1862

THE military experience of Garfield has the interest attaching to any extreme test of character and quality such as a man of his mentality and background undergoes when subjected to the strain of transforming himself from a civilian to an officer. Save that he possessed high general intelligence, willingness to work and personal courage, he seemed lacking in every necessary qualification for command. The circumstances were such that any preliminary training he could receive had to be brief and superficial, and he was left to discover his abilities in actual campaigning. In this, of course, he was on the same footing as thousands of other officers on both sides and his experience is a typical one. It is also interesting as throwing some slight illumination upon the administration and morale of the armies with which Garfield was connected, and as adding a little to the mass of military history, as yet never thoroughly digested, concerning certain important campaigns. It is from these aspects that the narrative in the following chapters is written.

The decision to enter the army once made, Garfield threw himself with no further hesitations into the task that lay before him. Without waiting for the formalities to be completed he went at once to Columbus, describing his early experiences in a letter to the "Friends at Home" (August 19): "I reported at Camp Chase and was placed on Gen. Hill's staff for the present and was appointed officer of the day for today. Having no quarters yet assigned me I slept that night on a pile of straw and the next morning went into Columbus to make some purchases. I intended to write Sunday but I went to visit the governor and he needed my assist-

ance nearly all day. At 6 p.m. I was obliged to return to camp and not yet having any blanket, I accepted the invitation of a Major,—former stage actor in N. Y. and Cincinnati,—to share his blanket with him. This morning at eight o'clock I took command of the brigade and police guard of 200 men and am to sit up on duty till tomorrow morning." He then added a plan of the camp and described the nature of his work.

"Six secession prisoners came in about noon," he continued, "whom I had to take in charge and give a receipt for. One was a hard old hunter, a Leather-stocking kind of man who had killed several Federal pickets in Western Va. All the letters that the 40 prisoners write or receive have to be read by the field officers of the day. I have just had the pleasure of reading eight or ten. . . . We shall soon organize a school of instruction for officers and men, and go into it with all our might. I am glad that some weeks are to elapse before we shall take the field for I want all I can glean from direct study and practice. I think I know how great a practical problem it is to make men learn to lose their individuality and merge it in the mass."

A further illustration of his mood is given in a letter of August 20 (L. Day): "It was not without a rigorous self-examination and, I may add, a struggle of no ordinary character within myself, that I entered upon this field of duty. But now that I have flung myself and all my plans of activity into the scale of the war, the struggle and the questionings are all over and I am busy and cheerful in the work of tearing down the old fabric of my proposed life and removing the rubbish for the erection of a new structure. As a mental phenomenon the work is a curious one." On August 30 he wrote to his mother: "I hope you will not allow yourself to feel troubled about me in the least, certainly not for a long time. My regiment is [not] yet commenced. . . . My reasons for going into the army are many, but chiefly because the men of military experience were most all now in the service and still more were needed for the new regiments. I felt it would not be manly or honorable for me to stay away from the contest longer. I am sure when you think it

all over and think how great and good a cause we have to fight for, you will not regret that you have furnished one son for it. I know you think better of me now for having gone. I assure you, I did not go from any mere desire to be in battle and gain a name. I went in with a full understanding of the perils and sufferings incident to war. I hope you will not have cause to be ashamed of me, whether I come out of it or not."

For the seven months following this decision, there are in existence, besides Garfield's official reports and personal letters, two authoritative narratives. One was the history of the Forty-second Ohio Infantry, Garfield's regiment, written by F. H. Mason, a Hiram boy who enlisted in Company A and had the advantage of Garfield's criticism and comments while preparing it. The other was a narrative written by Garfield himself in 1880 in the third person, to serve as biographical material. This, while based largely on the letters and documents, has also some personal touches which give it added value. Without giving undue prominence to what was, after all, a small episode in the war as a whole, these accounts will be used to bring out the importance, in Garfield's personal history, of the stirring months after August, 1861.

On August 21 Garfield was mustered into service as lieutenant colonel of the Forty-second regiment and assigned to duty at Camp Chase. The proposed regiment was not yet raised, that task being left to him and other officers to be joined with him, after they should have learned enough about their duties to warrant assuming command. The next weeks were accordingly for Garfield a period of military schooling. In his narrative, he says of himself: "He entered upon camp duty, attended the drills and studied the tactics. By the aid of blocks to represent companies, officers, and non-commissioned officers, he thoroughly mastered the Infantry Tactics in his quarters and attended and participated in the drills in camp."¹

He was at once set to work and learned the art of com-

¹ "My Campaign," in *North American Review*, December, 1886, p. 525.

mand by actual exercise of his powers. "It is a little odd," he commented (August 22), "for me to become a pupil again, but I come into it easily and have no fear of any disastrous failure in learning duty. Since I began this letter I have probably given a hundred orders; among other things held a trial and sentenced a sentinel to three days imprisonment on bread and water for sleeping on his post." A week later he reported to his wife that he was "practicing riding a good deal and getting some skill." On August 31 he sent a "general letter containing miscellaneous events and reflections" which covered observations on flies, on the romantic story of a young German recruit who had fled to America because of a hopeless love for his employer's daughter and on camp incidents. Of his own doings he remarked: "The duty of instructing the guard in their duties as day and night sentinels has been committed to me and so every morning at eight I am obliged to make the same speech over again, which seems very much like the explanations which we make at the beginning of a term, when we assign rooms and deliver 'Rules and Regulations.'"

Further observations show that he had already a growing sense of the need of ample training before sending troops into action. "It is very unfortunate for the service," he said, "that regiments should be hurried into the field with so little preparation. When the news of Col. Tyler's defeat reached us, the 27th under Col. Ewing (son of Thomas Ewing, with whom I had formed a very pleasant acquaintance) was filled up from other half-formed regiments and last evening left for the valley of the Kanawha. I should dread the responsibility of taking such a regiment into the field. They went out of camp at dusk last evening, with arms and three days cooked rations, thoughtless and jubilant. I came back sadly to my hut, repeating Byron's splendid stanzas on 'the unreturning brave.'" Later he added: "Cincinnati is having another periodical scare. She has asked the Governor to draft 50,000 men for her protection. I hope the 42nd will not be sent to guard slaughter yards and pork-packing establishments."

By September it was so clear that Garfield was going to

make good that Governor Dennison commissioned him colonel on the fifth, and, adding Lionel Sheldon and Don A. Pardee as lieutenant colonel and major respectively, directed them to raise the regiment. Pardee was especially desired by Garfield, since he had attended the Naval Academy and would be well qualified to take part of the burden of drilling recruits off his hands. Another officer whose appointment was requested by Garfield was W. H. Clapp as regimental adjutant, a former Hiram boy, who had served in the Bull Run campaign as sergeant in the Seventy-first New York Regiment. Then followed a strenuous two weeks, in which Garfield's growing talents as a stump speaker were put to their full use. "About the middle of September these three officers went to the vicinity of their homes and began the work of recruiting for their regiment. Colonel Garfield addressed the students of his academy and the citizens of his neighborhood and raised the first company for the regiment in two or three days. This company was mainly composed of his students, many of them far advanced in the college course. It reached Camp Chase and was mustered into the service on the 20th of September."¹

Garfield's activity was so great during this recruiting campaign as to leave no time for letter writing, but anecdotes showing his facility and his success are collected in the regimental history. On one occasion he is described as appearing at a dance, September 19, at Newburgh and opening a speech "with the thrilling passage from Childe Harold:

There was a sound of revelry by night,
And Belgium's capital had gather'd then
Her Beauty and her Chivalry.

The effect was electrical. After speaking twenty minutes Col. Garfield produced a blank enlistment roll. Capt. Chas. P. Jewett came up and signed it, and when the ball ended that night there were sixty names upon the roll."²

¹ "My Campaign," *North American Review*, December, 1886, p. 526.

² F. H. Mason, *The Forty-Second Ohio Infantry*, p. 287.

By the end of the month he was back in camp again, organizing his recruits and fairly embarrassed by his success in raising them. (September 28.) "This is the third night that I have passed in succession without regular sleep. When I reached Columbus I worked incessantly for two days and most of the nights to get my regimental quarters in condition, and to get blankets and other comforts for the boys. Before this was accomplished other companies began to come in. We have now five companies in the regiment and it has been the hardest work of my life to secure the necessities for their comfort. I have dragooned and chased down nearly every state officer and at last started on Thursday evening (not having gone to bed at all the night before) for Cincinnati where we had made requisition for all our stores. The articles were not in the warehouse of the Quarter Master and so I went to the contractors one by one and at 10:30 o'clock last night I took the train and am here waiting for the carriage to take me to the camp. I think I am right in saying I was never so tired in my life. I never tried to write before when my hand trembled from sheer exhaustion. But the unprecedented rapidity with which my regiment has been filling up has given me much harder work than I shall have by and by. So please don't be troubled about my health which is good. I think I shall get arrangements soon to have you come into camp and stay a week or two. We have established our regimental mess and were I not too weary I would describe our cook and meals."

It did not take long to set them all hard at work. "Regimental company and squad drill, skirmish drill and bayonet exercises were constantly kept up," he records,¹ "from six to eight hours a day. For the officers he organized a school and required thorough recitations in the tactics, illustrating the manœuvre by the blocks which he had prepared for his own use." When all was in operation, he was ready to entertain his friends, and wrote promptly to his wife and to Rhodes to urge them to visit the camp. (Rhodes, October 2.) "The drums have just beaten the signal call for taps

¹ "My Campaign," *North American Review*, December, 1886, p. 526.

which means for soldiers to put out the lights in all their quarters and retire. This gives me a moment of solitude and my time for study on the lesson for tomorrow. But I take a few moments from it to say that the time of our departure draws near." He then made full plans for a visit over Sunday. "I have six companies already and two more expected tomorrow. I have a fine brass band and a good field band. We will give you a taste of camp fare and camp life. I have never been more than two thirds as busy as I am here."

Garfield invited not only his Hiram associates but some of his prominent Disciple friends, such as Harmon Austin and Harrison Jones, a preacher who had greatly impressed him the year he was converted. He urged his wife to bring "Trot," in letters of longing and parental hunger. When the visit occurred it was to him a vision of heaven and he wrote to his wife that it "leaves an impression on my mind and heart which will give me hope and joy in a great many dark hours. I shall feel much happier in going out into the field than I should if you had not come." His only regret was that "Trot" could not have been there too. But the fact that he had his wife for a week was enough to carry him through many a desolate month to come.

And now one finds in Garfield's letters the rapid growth of a new and powerful sentiment, that of pride in the new organization he was molding into shape, and with it a feeling of profound responsibility. On October 8 he wrote to Rhodes: "In regard to regimental colors, I am glad to hear of the movement which has begun in Hiram. Nothing adds so much enthusiasm to a regiment as that which adds to the equipage and pride of its appearance. In a banner is symbolized an army's honor and its country's glory and if the affection of friends at home can also be expressed in it, it will add wonderfully to the eclat and spirit of the regiment."

In a letter of October 26 one finds a revelation of the inner struggle that was bound to come between the old romantic, emotional self—that of the Disciple "Brother"—and the new military one now under process of solidifying. "My nature is perversely peculiar," he wrote. "It seems that just now, when I need to be hard and almost unfeeling, my

sympathies are quicker than ever. I never felt so much the need of love and tenderness. I am lavishing my caresses on my horses. They have both been hugged and patted a score of times the past week and several times at midnight, and I am fancying there is a sort of secret understanding between them and me—a mute sympathy when they lay their velvety noses against my cheek and pretend to bite my beard. A late occurrence has put a wider gulf between me and the men. I was so proud of them that I was willing to warrant that they were not engaged in any irregularities like breaking guard etc. But lately I found a few had been engaged in it and last night I spent nearly all night in scouting. This morning found five of my men in the guard-house. It has touched my pride, roused all my determination, till I now feel that I must be the scourge of many rather than the co-operant friend and leader. I feel, therefore, much more isolated tonight than I have ever done in camp before.” Such moments of reaction soon passed, and Garfield’s pride and affection for “his” regiment constantly grew as under his hand it became gradually unified.

Toward the end of October he had to go, however, on a second recruiting tour, in order to complete the necessary numbers. He wrote to his wife in explanation (November 4): “I did not expect to be out making speeches again but here I am at it, at the rate of two or three a day. I found if the regiment was ever to be filled up, we must do it ourselves. We selected Ashland Co. because it had not sent its quota to the army. This is a hard place to work in but we have got the ice fully broken. There is here a set of men who have not given up their partisan prejudices and are still more than half in sympathy with the South. Added to that there is a style of overpious men and churches here, who are too godly to be humane. Commencing Wednesday evening I have made eight speeches and have raised 36 volunteers. They all refused me their churches for last evening except the heretic, J. N. Carman, who has been ostracised by the Disciples of this place. He went on to the platform of the Town Hall with me and I addressed a very crowded house. I felt particularly free and I believe I never succeeded better

for an hour than I did in characterizing the Christianity of Ashland and of all people who were 'afraid to do good on the Sabbath Day.' I then called for volunteers and six of the best young men in town and the teacher of the Union Schools and a Methodist preacher came forward. So I think we shall succeed. Indeed I told the Adj. General that I should never return to the regiment till I brought a company." There can be little doubt that the young colonel profited greatly in making such appeals from his long practice in conducting "protracted meetings" which culminated in young people "coming forward."

Garfield got his company from Ashland County. The next day S. M. Barber, the superintendent of schools, "signed the enlistment roll and his example was followed by every boy in the school capable of carrying a gun. Mr. Barber did not even return to the schoolhouse." This gave the start.¹ After it Garfield snatched a moment to see his wife, but before he could return to his regiment he was again recalled to stumping. "I received a letter from Maj. Pardee," he wrote (November 17), "urging me to come to Medina and help raise a company. I stopped off at Grafton and rode 30 miles to Lodi and made a speech that evening and up to this time I have been going just as I did in Ashland. I am very weary of speaking I assure you and yet I believe I did as well in the Court House here yesterday as have ever done. We have up to this time obtained 63 names in this county and I think we can get a full company. I have become exceedingly anxious for the condition and welfare of the regiment. It is now nearly three weeks since I saw them and I very much fear they will begin to fear that I am neglecting them." By November 23 he reported 917 names on the roll and a week later the regiment was filled, with 1,009. Then came renewed drilling and instruction, in the midst of which the equipment for the organization came slowly in. It was not until November 27 that rifles were supplied,—heavy Belgian muzzle-loaders,—and the force was ready for the next step, which could only be toward the front, either independently or with one of the large armies now forming.

¹ Mason, *The Forty-Second Ohio Infantry*, p. 292.

The process of organizing this regiment was for Garfield a deeply moving experience. It demanded the constant exercise of powers that had hitherto lain dormant; and transferred him into a realm where none of his accustomed habits, unless it be that of disciplinary teaching, were involved. All that was sentimental, religious, oratorical, idealistic and especially introspective was thrust aside under the pressing exigencies of authority and responsibility. He wrote to Austin (December 4): "The immense work of organizing a thousand men, getting them properly officered, armed, and equipped and making out sixty full company rolls together with the usual routine duties of drill and discipline have filled the past month full to overflowing. We are now seeing our way clear to get off into the field after so many long delays. I am very well satisfied with the condition of the regiment and every day feel more confidence in it and trust in the success of its performances if I and other officers do our full measure of duty."

As to his success in the new enterprise, the words in the regimental history, written by one of his Hiram students who volunteered with the first group, may be quoted. "The influence of General Garfield upon the Forty-second Regiment was unbounded. As colonel not less than as Professor and Principal of a collegiate School, he evinced a rare and extraordinary power in controlling, interesting and inspiring young men. It was due largely to his enthusiastic efforts that the regiment was made up of some of the best material that Ohio sent into the field. The careful, laborious education, the discipline, the quickening of individual self-respect that the regiment underwent at his hands while in camp Chase were never lost upon its men. Long after he had gone to other duties the recollection of his words was a source of inspiration."¹

Perhaps the most striking thing in all Garfield's military career is his utter absence of sentimentality about his own doings, his duties, his authority or his responsibility for bloodshed. Apparently he accepted, once for all, every impli-

¹ Mason, *The Forty-Second Ohio Infantry*, p. 20.

cation connected with the business of war and the status of being an officer, and wasted no further thought on the matter. At all events, the transformation from the teacher-politician who was equally a Disciple preacher most of whose thoughts and concerns were with the idealistic, the religious, the tender side of life, into the thoroughgoing soldier was complete. This idea he himself expressed in several letters: "One by one my old plans and aims, modes of thought and feeling are found to be inconsistent with present duty and are set aside to give place to the new structure of military life."¹ Just as at Hiram he was a single-minded teacher, ready to exert authority to secure the success of the school, so with his regiment, his brigade or, later, his army; he purposed to use all the power in his hands for the right ends.

On December 14 the regiment was suddenly summoned to take the field, as described by Garfield in a letter to his wife (December 16): "A little before midnight of Saturday a telegraphic order came from Gen. Buell ordering the 42d to proceed with all possible dispatch to Prestonburg, in Floyd County, Eastern Kentucky. We left camp at 9 o'clock Sunday morning, had the banner presentation at the Depot and at 2:30 p.m. were in motion toward Cincinnati, where we arrived about 9 o'clock. I had sent Col. Sheldon on the night before, as soon as the order came, to provide transportation and determine our route. When we landed from the cars a dispatch was in waiting for me from Gen. Buell, telling me to send the Regt. on toward its destination and report myself at his Headquarters for orders. I worked till 2 o'clock this morning in getting on board our men and baggage and our supplies and transportation teams, which consisted [of] 150 mules, 25 army wagons, and six ambulances for the sick. The boys are very much crowded and I fear they will not be comfortable. The flag presentation was a fine affair. The Governor told me that the 42d was the best regiment that had yet been raised in the state. I called at Gen. Buell's Headquarters soon after my arrival, but he was not in. I am to meet him at his room to-night at 9

¹ J. W. Keifer, "Memorial Address," *Society of Army of Cumberland*, 1885, p. 122.

o'clock. After which I will write you the result of the interview."

Before describing the campaign which followed it will be worth while to glance at the situation in December, 1861, and January, 1862, in order to see its place in the general plan. The doubtful status of Kentucky, brought about by the effort of the state government to remain "neutral," had been ended in September, and Confederate and Union "troops" had taken position facing each other in a broken line across the southern part of the state between the Mississippi River and the Cumberland Mountains. A similar line divided Missouri. Back of this front on both Northern and Southern sides, considerable armies were drilling and being organized in preparation for the spring campaigns, which would undoubtedly take the form of an effort by the North to advance in eastern Virginia and down the Mississippi in hopes of crushing Southern resistance by one mighty effort.

The three Union commanders, McClellan, Buell, and Halleck, were engrossed in the business of organization and had no idea of wasting their strength in premature fighting with partly drilled troops, while the Southern commanders, still more burdened with the difficult task of finding equipment for their inchoate armies, were compelled to stand on the defensive. There was one region, however, where Buell felt that the military frontier was not sufficiently secure, namely, in eastern Kentucky, where at two points Confederate forces seemed to threaten the country to the north of them. In the Big Sandy River valley, intervening between the Union forces in western Virginia and those in central Kentucky, a body of Confederates under General Humphrey Marshall had taken possession and might, unless blocked, descend toward the Ohio River. Further westward a much larger force under the Confederate commanders Zollicoffer and Crittenden was in a position to endanger the Union control of the surrounding country. Against these Buell dispatched two expeditions, sending General Thomas with eight regiments against the larger Confederate force. Against the smaller body in the Sandy valley he determined to dispatch Garfield with a mixed command of Ohio and Kentucky

troops, and it was for consultation on that subject that he summoned the wholly inexperienced colonel to Louisville. What happened can be followed minutely through Garfield's letters of the time as well as through the official war records and other narratives in which the campaign was described.¹

Garfield described to Rhodes his first interview with General Buell. "He is a direct martial-spirited man and has an air of decision and business which I like. He told me at once that he knew of me, and that knowledge led him to put me in command of the expedition to drive back the rebels from Eastern Kentucky. You remember that Williams was drawn back from Piketon. He and Humphrey Marshall have returned with an increased force, variously estimated at from 2000 to 6000 men including cavalry and artillery. The General says the information is so vague and his own knowledge is so limited that he must entrust the management of the expedition to my discretion. The work will be positively enormous, for a large share of the Ky. forces are as yet unarmed and undisciplined. It is a horrible country fully as rough as Western Va. and the general estimates that I cannot leave there before Spring. He said (and I fully agree with him) that he would have much preferred to have me with him in the grand column, but yet he said I would have a much greater chance for distinction. The territory I am to command covers more than 6000 sq. miles. I must go to studying geography." He did so, instantly. He "returned to his hotel," says Mason,² "procured a map of Kentucky, the last census report, paper, pen, and ink and sat down to his task. He studied the roads, resources and population of every county in Eastern Kentucky. At daylight he was still at work, but at nine o'clock he was at General Buell's headquarters with a sketch of his plans."

In the midst of this severe night's work Garfield paused to complete his letter to his wife. "(11:45 P.M.) For two hours

¹ *The War of the Rebellion* (referred to hereafter under title *Official Records*), Vol. VII, pp. 21-61 and later; "My Campaign in Eastern Kentucky," *North American Review*, December, 1881, Vol. 391, pp. 525-535.

² *The Forty-Second Ohio Infantry*, p. 12.

I have either been sitting or pacing the room alone. I have had Colton's large Atlas before me, and have been trying to get some knowledge of the territory which is to be the scene of my work for, it may be, many months to come. I returned from visiting the General a little before ten o'clock. He says he knows but little about the country or the real extent of the danger. This I must examine and then lay my plans and act accordingly. When I reflect that this movement covers an area of 6000 sq. miles and has no railroad or telegraph lines, and think how soon the winter will be upon us in all its severity among those mountains—I feel that my hands are very full indeed. But after all I must confess that I am pleased with the prospect of work."

Garfield's queries which he presented to General Buell covered somewhat minutely all phases of his authority and civil policy in the region and his list of wants indicated the very fragmentary state of preparation of his proposed command. His plan involved sending part of his force from central Kentucky toward the Sandy River valley while the rest moved up the valley from the Ohio River "to get into the rebel rear." Of this second interview, at which Garfield presented his questions and his proposals, he has left a description in his narrative as follows:

"Few officers in the service possess more reticence, terse logic, and severe habits of military discipline than General Buell, and the interview between him and the military tyro was a peculiarly interesting one. The one, submitting his plans and queries and curiously and anxiously watching the face of the commander, but finding no look or expression to indicate his opinion, either of the good sense of the queries or the feasibility of the plan. The queries were answered in a quick sententious manner, but no word was spoken by the General to indicate approval or disapproval of the plan. The Conference was closed with the single remark. 'Your orders will be sent to your hotel at six o'clock this evening.' Promptly at that hour the order was received, organizing the Eighteenth Brigade of the Army of the Ohio, Colonel Garfield commanding, and a letter of instructions in General Buell's own handwriting giving general instructions for the

campaign. They were, with but slight modifications, the same as the plans submitted by Colonel Garfield.”¹

Buell’s instructions, written in clear, soldierly fashion on December 17, were to the effect that Brigadier General Marshall’s force of Confederates, who had entered Kentucky across the mountains, was to be driven out or captured, and Piketon occupied to protect the region. Garfield was given two Ohio regiments, the Fortieth and Forty-second, and two Kentucky organizations, the Fourteenth and Twenty-second, besides two squadrons of the First Kentucky cavalry. He had no artillery, his request for some mountain howitzers being refused on the ground that the nature of the country and the roads made it impracticable to use them. In all, his forces amounted nominally to over 3,000 men. His task was to take these troops in the dead of winter about seventy-five miles up the valley of the Big Sandy River, which was partly navigable but which was blessed with nothing but the ordinary “dirt roads wretched beyond description” parallel to its course. To move and supply his expedition and to keep men and horses alive after it reached its objective was the most arduous thing that confronted him. As to fighting, the troops were utterly green, and only two of the regiments, those from Ohio, had had any considerable training even in camp drill and the use of arms.

Garfield’s material is best described in his report of January 17, after the campaign. The Fortieth and Forty-second Ohio, he said, were both efficient and in good condition, but the Kentucky troops left a great deal to be desired. “The Fourteenth Kentucky,” he said, “is composed of excellent material but is in a wretched state of discipline. Very few of its members have been drilled in the school of the soldier, much less that of the company and battalion. It can be considered but little better than a well-disposed, Union-loving mob. The six companies of the First Kentucky Cavalry, under Lieut. Colonel Letcher, have been very hard worked. A large number refused to come into the mountains and many that started deserted. Col. Letcher is an admirable

¹ “My Campaign,” *North American Review*, December, 1886, pp. 527-528.

gentleman, but a more demoralized, discouraged body of men I have never seen." The Twenty-second Kentucky, part of which was with him, and a squad of cavalry under Major McLaughlin, he considered "in a tolerably good state of discipline."¹

To send such troops into action was, of course, only to be excused on the grounds that the opposing force was certain to be no better, and in this respect Buell could not be charged with any error. The reports of Brigadier General Humphrey Marshall, commanding the Confederates, show that he had three regiments of infantry, a battalion of cavalry and a battery of four guns—in all 3,000 men—and he complained incessantly of lack of discipline and weakness of regimental and company commanders. Marshall himself might claim a *prima facie* superiority to Garfield on the ground that he had actually attended West Point in the class of 1832 and had seen service in the Mexican War.

There was this difference between the two men and their respective tasks. Marshall was inveterately a politician and public man; he felt that his entrance into Kentucky was chiefly for political effect, and having made his advance, issued his proclamations, invited recruits and seized supplies, he was at a loss as to the next step. Meanwhile he wrote voluminous reports to Richmond clamoring for arms, food, instructions and reinforcements, explaining and justifying each step he took.

Garfield, on the contrary, had precise instructions, a definite objective and moved to his task with a single mind. His reports are scarcely half the length of Marshall's and concern themselves solely with the duties in hand. That he should reveal the traits of a great general on this, his first—and as it proved, his last—essay in independent command, was scarcely to be expected, but it certainly was possible for him to display his power of leadership, his capacity for pushing ahead and his willingness to take ordinary risks in aiming at his goal. If, at the same time, he should manage to keep his raw troops in hand so as to hold them together

¹ *Official Records*, Vol. VII, p. 32.

while in action and while in camp, he would do more than many an officer at this stage of the Civil War.

The little campaign that followed demands no elaborate description, although it can easily be followed in minute detail in Garfield's dispatches and in his narrative. It ran, in brief, as follows: Leaving Louisville, December 20, Garfield went to Paris, Kentucky, where he formally assumed command of the Fortieth Ohio on its arrival. Thence he returned to the railroad and went via Cincinnati to Cattletsburg, from which point he ascended the Big Sandy River, rejoining his own regiment at Louisa, December 23. Moving his force forward to George's Creek, he waited five days to collect supplies and secure equipment for his Kentucky volunteers, the "well-disposed, Union-loving mob." While waiting he sent instructions to Colonel Cranor, commanding the Fortieth Ohio, which he had left near Lexington, to march across country and enter the Big Sandy valley in such wise as to get across the line of retreat of the Confederate force, known to be intrenched at Paintsville.

In letters sent home, as opportunity offered, Garfield described each step of his movements, revealing also in brief sentences the ebb and flow of his feelings as he began his new and exciting task. From the start he found one drawback to the honor of commanding several regiments. "I am now feeling badly," he wrote to his wife (December 24), "in reference to this Brigade matter for fear it will separate me from the 42d. I would rather stay with them all the while than to command a Brigade a few months and then go back to them and find them changed in their habits and affections." The next day, after joining the brigade at George's Creek, he wrote a short note. (December 25.) "An express rider is just about to leave for the mouth of the river. I have been writing dispatches for the last two hours. We are now within 18 miles of 2500 rebels who have four guns. Our scouts have been very near the enemy's pickets. We are waiting for our Ky. regts. to come up. Have [asked] Gen. Buell to send us artillery. As soon as these arrive we shall attack the rebels at Paintsville, who are now fortifying the place. We may be attacked where we are, but I do not expect it.

Conceive of my great hurry and pardon this brief note. God grant you may now be enjoying a merry Christmas."

After some difficulty in getting into communication, the two movements started, Cranor marching southeastward, Garfield advancing southward, December 31, making slow progress, since the roads were nearly impassable. In the intervals of marching Garfield tried to impart some instruction to his raw troops, having drill and inspection at George's Creek and forming line of battle and showing them skirmishing tactics on January 1. The spirit in which he made this advance is revealed in his home letters, which he sent back as opportunity presented itself. "Headquarters 18th Brigade. Camp Moore, Jan. 1, 1862. Just as I had given up that my scout who was sent to Col. Cranor with the message to move on to Prestonburg had been captured, I was [made] to rejoice more than [by] any news ever received in my life by the arrival of the faithful 'Kit Carson' fifteen minutes ago. He has been shot at, twice surrounded by enemies, once escaped by strategem, and once, when aid[ed] by a party of Union men, fought and captured several prisoners. Col. Cranor left McCormick's Gap yesterday morning and is now moving via Hazle Green toward Prestonburg. I have organized a system of spies and scouts which is giving me full and satisfactory information of the doings of the enemy. He is now entrenched on a hill three miles back of Paintsville on the Prestonburg road and is fortifying still more. I dare hardly hope that I shall capture a whole army, and I always feel very reluctant to say I think I shall do a thing when I may fail of succeeding. But I do think I am getting into a position from which I have good ground to hope that I shall capture him. I cannot tell you how deeply alive to the scheme in hand are all the impulses and energies of my nature. I begin to see the obstacles melt away before me and the old feeling of succeeding in what I undertake gradually taking quiet possession of me."

Some of Garfield's difficulties he mentioned in a letter to his mother (January 26): "It is the worst country to get around in I ever saw. There is not room to form a regiment in line, for want of level ground. The roads are very bad,

indeed almost impassable, and we were obliged to make them all over before we could get along with our teams. The 42nd regiment had 150 wild mules which had never been broken, and we were obliged to work a long time to get them so that they could haul our wagons."

On the sixth of January he was in front of the Confederate position and some shots were exchanged by pickets, but the next day on advancing he found the Confederates had withdrawn and by the evening he was able to enter their abandoned positions. "In consequence of having to build two bridges across Jenny's Creek the command did not reach Paintsville until daylight of the ninth," says Garfield in his narrative. The regimental historian adds, "We bridged Jenny's Creek, Colonel Garfield himself standing in the mud and placing the rails."¹ The reason for this Confederate retirement, according to Marshall's report, was that he had learned by an intercepted dispatch of the march of the Fortieth Ohio toward his rear and withdrew in order to crush that force when it should arrive, thus defeating Garfield's command in detail. But the Fortieth Ohio, instead of persisting in its march on the supposed Confederate rear, "construed the Confederate retreat into an advance and not being able to resist the whole rebel force, came down Paint Valley instead of going to Prestonburg." On January 8, accordingly, the whole expedition was united.² During the days from January 6 to January 8 Garfield had the assistance of 300 cavalry, the Second Virginia, under Captain Bolles, sent by General J. D. Cox, who was commanding in western Virginia, but they were obliged to depart before he could engage the Confederates, leaving him with the "demoralized and discouraged" Kentuckians above mentioned as his only horsemen.

In letters to his wife and to his mother he described with great zest the battle which now followed. January 13 he sent a fourteen-page narrative of the campaign with two sketch maps. In general it covers the same ground as the official reports, but gives a great many more details. Of the

¹ Mason, *Forty-Second Ohio Infantry*, p. 65.

² *Official Records*, Vol. VII, p. 28.

night operations on the eighth and ninth of January he said: "It was the hardest march I ever made. But it had a fine influence on the regiment. It schooled them to danger, for there was not a half hour of that gloomy night in which we did not have reasonable apprehensions of an attack." The letter also shows that, vigorous as Garfield's movements were, they would have been still quicker had he not yielded to the judgment of his subordinates. Before moving from Tom's Creek (January 7), "I held a council of war as to the time when we should make the advance. The council was composed of field officers plus Harry Jones (chaplain) who is a privileged character in all our deliberations. I have always believed in the success of vigorous and well directed audacity, and I wanted to move the next day (Saturday). There was but one man who agreed with me and that was Maj. Pardee. The rest all agreed on Monday."

Garfield's forces were dwindling under him, not merely by the exhaustion and the desertion of the cavalry, but by the failure of many of his Kentucky volunteers to appear at all. Only 300 men of the Twenty-second Kentucky had turned up by January 9. With what he had, however, picking the best men from each regiment, he advanced to attack the Confederates, who were drawn up on various ridges across Middle Creek valley a short distance from Prestonburg, and on January 10 the battle took place. Up to this point, whether one approve Garfield's rash strategy of trying to attack a superior force in front and rear with separate columns, it is clear that the young commander was pushing ahead with vigor and with no more delay than was forced upon him by the extreme difficulties of transportation and the need to wait for the arrival of the Fortieth Ohio either behind or before the enemy.

The night before the attack was spent on a hilltop with no fires and under a drizzling rain. In his letter (January 13) he says: "At half past twelve o'clock I climbed the hill and rolled myself up in the blanket, while the cold, drizzling rain poured down upon us during the whole night. At three in the morning I turned out and called up the boys to take their crackers and prepare for the march. I assure you it was

a very dreary prospect. The deepest, worst mud I ever saw was under foot, and a dense cold fog hung around us as the boys filed slowly down the hill-side."

That night before the battle made a deep impression on Garfield's memory, and he often referred to it when the anniversary arrived. On January 10, 1870, he wrote to Hinsdale: "Eight years ago this morning and almost at this moment, I was getting up from a short sleep on the ground with no cover but a blanket and my clothes, and with my saddle for a pillow, in the midst of rain and sleet, to call up the 2300 noble fellows under my command, who were also sleeping on the ground, and before the day dawned, we were marching up the valley of Middle Creek to fight our first battle. To me that was a morning of intense anxiety. War was a new and awful apparition, and the possibilities of living through a battle were very slender in comparison with what they appeared to me after a few months had familiarized us with scenes of blood."

When the force came in sight of the enemy position where he could see rebel officers watching, Garfield ordered his cavalry to dislodge the enemy cavalry from behind a hill and "meantime, for the sake of bravado and audacity I ordered a battalion drill and we formed squares and wheeled from column into line, while the long line of our rear was trailing around the hill into the plain. I was willing the rebel officers should see the drill and should see the troops file on—but I didn't want them to look till the whole line was in sight. I wanted them to leave off looking when they might have a vague impression of numbers and hosts yet unseen coming on. So I stationed a sharp shooter to fire at them just before the rear of our column hove in sight." Then, feeling sure that the main body of the rebels was in front of them, Garfield advanced his line and the battle began.

The course of the "battle" reveals, not without humor, the peculiarities of raw troops. Garfield sent forward his forces on both sides of the valley, as he described in detail in his report and with additional gusto in a long letter to his home circle, and for four hours the Ohioans and Kentuckians fired at their antagonists, who retorted energetically from their

hilltops and kept their battery of artillery in constant activity. At the height of the action Garfield says: "I have no doubt but that a thousand rifle bullets came within a foot of me. They cut the twigs, splintered the rock and cut a canteen which hung beside me. I directed the reserve consisting of 300 men to fire. Such terrific volleys I had never seen. The hill trembled under the recoil. The enemy fell back over the ridge, but the sharp shooters hidden behind rocks kept up a random firing especially at me and Harry Jones who stood beside me on the rock and acted as my aide-de-camp during the battle. He is as brave as a lion."

When Garfield had his whole force engaged and the only results had been to push the enemy back up to the top of the ridge he says: "My reserve was now reduced to a mere handful and the agony of the moment was terrible. The whole hill was enshrouded in such a column of smoke as rolls from the mouth of a volcano. Thousands of fire-flashes leaped like lightning from the cloud. Every minute the fight grew hotter. I was just ordering my whole reserve into line and was going to lead them up the hill myself when I looked and saw the Hiram banner sweep up the hill. I shouted to our boys to look. They saw, and such a shout of joy now greeted my ears. The reinforcement, on double quick returned the wild shout and the fighters on the hills heard, saw and returned an answering shout. The enemies saw and heard likewise. A rebel colonel mounted the hill on horseback and shouted three times to his men to retreat. Seven Ohio boys leveled their rifles at him and fired. Horse and rider tumbled back over the hill. They were driven in dire confusion. Night closed in upon us. I did not dare to pursue in the night lest we should fire upon each other."

It does not appear that they came to close quarters anywhere, but, according to Garfield, the Confederates gradually fell back until in the words of the report "At 4:30 he ordered a retreat. My men drove him down the slopes of the hills and at 5 o'clock he had been driven from every point."¹ Examination of the report of General Marshall gives a totally different version of the fight. According to the elo-

¹ *Official Records*, Vol. VII, pp. 29-31.

quent Confederate: "The enemy did not move me from any one position I assumed and at nightfall withdrew from the field, leaving me just where I was in the morning. After he had withdrawn I called my troops down from the hills and pursued the march."¹ Only lack of food prevented him, he says, from attacking the defeated Union troops and completing their destruction.

According to the estimates of the commanding generals it was a severe action. Garfield reports that the Confederates "carried off the majority" of their dead and wounded, but still left eighty-five dead on the field, including three officers.² That would indicate at least 300 casualties. On the other side Marshall asserts that the Union troops lost 250 killed and 300 wounded.³ If such were the case it would have been relatively one of the bloodiest actions of the war, since Confederate losses of 300 out of 1,000 actually in action would have been excessive, but a Union loss of 550 out of 900 engaged would have deserved the name of a slaughter. Each commander, of course, felt that he had fought superior numbers; Garfield estimated the Confederates "not less than 3500" men,⁴ while Marshall believed the Union force to number "4,500 to 5000 with at least 500 cavalry."⁵

If, however, we credit the reports of each commander regarding his own numbers and losses, we find that Garfield had about 1,500 men present, of which about 900 were engaged, and that Marshall had 2,000, of whom about one half were in action. The Union losses, instead of 550, were 3 killed and 18 wounded; the Confederates, instead of 300, reported only 10 killed and 14 wounded. The Confederates do not admit losing any prisoners. Garfield claims to have taken 25.

As to the fighting, it is not difficult to harmonize the discordant narratives, for the Confederates, according to both, withdrew at the end of the afternoon, and did it without

¹ *Official Records*, Vol. VII, pp. 47, 56.

² *Ibid.*, Vol. VII, p. 31.

³ *Ibid.*, Vol. VII, p. 48.

⁴ *Ibid.*, Vol. VII, p. 31.

⁵ *Ibid.*, Vol. VII, p. 56.

material difficulty, not losing a gun. Garfield himself says it was too dark to pursue. Doubtless their retreat was, as Garfield says, "in great disorder." Any movement by either side at that time would have deserved such characterization. At all events, whether for lack of food or for other reasons, Marshall's command went southward as rapidly as was possible over the roads of that region, and did not stop until, as he reported, he was "16 miles from the scene of action."¹

We have here a typical amateur engagement of that epoch in the war when hard driving attacks such as are necessary to achieve real victory were out of the question, owing to the total absence of battle training or even of ordinary discipline. These two bodies of raw troops stood opposite one another at a considerable distance, skirmishing from eight in the morning, firing vigorously from noon to five o'clock, the Confederates in addition discharging thirty rounds from their cannon, and inflicting almost no loss on one another. Under such circumstances the commander who shows superior nerve by inducing his troops to stay longest on the field will win, and in this case, despite Marshall's bluster, it is impossible not to see that Garfield gained his point.

At all events, the Union troops entered Prestonburg on January 11. Finding the place stripped of provisions, Garfield moved back to Paintsville, to recuperate his men before the next move. His mood, as well may be imagined, was one of exultation. "I can never tell you," he wrote (January 13), "how full of love and pride my heart is toward the Hiram boys. Men of other regiments and other states do not hesitate to say they were bravest among the brave. Many of them shot even when they were faint from the loss of blood." To his mother, writing January 26, he sent other details. "It was a terrible sight, next morning to walk over the battle field and see the dead rebels stretched on the hill in all shapes and positions." Certainly if Garfield in person found eighty-five rebel dead on the field it is difficult to accept Marshall's figures as unquestionable. Years later, as reported by W. D. Howells, he made an interesting comment on the impression this first sight of men killed in battle pro-

¹ *Official Records*, Vol. VII, p. 48.

duced upon him.¹ "He said that he noticed a number of men lying on the dewy meadow in different shapes of sleep and for an instant, in the inveterate association of peace, he thought they were resting there after the fatigue of a long day's march. Suddenly it broke upon him that they were dead, and that they had been killed in the skirmish which had left the Unionist force victors. Then, he said, at the sight of these dead men whom other men had killed, something went out of him, the habit of a lifetime, that never came back again; the sense of the sacredness of life and the impossibility of destroying it."

The main object of the campaign was thus achieved and Garfield felt the glow of success. This was war,—the kind of thing he had hoped to do when entering the army,—driving the enemy before him and freeing the soil of Kentucky. On January 11 he issued a proclamation to his troops, couched a little in the Napoleonic style supposed to be appropriate:

"Soldiers of the Eighteenth Brigade! I am proud of you, you have marched in the face of a foe of double your numbers," etc. "With no experience but the consciousness of your own manhood, you have driven him from his strongholds, leaving scores of his bloody dead unburied. I greet you as brave men. Our common country will not forget you. I have recalled you from the pursuit that you may regain vigor for still greater exertions. Let no one tarnish his well-earned honors. Remember your duties as American citizens and sacredly respect the rights and property of those with whom you may come in contact. Officers and soldiers, your duty has been nobly done. For this I thank you."²

On January 16 he followed it with a proclamation to the inhabitants of the valley, reassuring those who feared reprisal and inviting surrender on the part of those who had temporarily joined Marshall. In a letter to Rhodes, a month later (February 12), he explained that the reason for this utterance was his desire to prevent the Civil War in eastern Kentucky from degenerating into a succession of the hor-

¹ Howells, *Years of My Youth*, p. 206.

² From copy with Garfield papers.

rible blood feuds of that region. "My address to the people of this valley, which the papers have been pleased to call a proclamation is designed to effect one purpose,—to weed out from the war here the infernal devil that has made this valley a home of fiends and converted this war into a black hole in which to murder any man that any soldier from envy, lust, or revenge, hated. I have a soldier now under arrest, and whom I expect to sentence to death in a few days for shooting a prisoner (a neighbor of his) in cold blood. If these people are ever to live together again in peace I think the reconciliation ought to be begun while the army is here. I know there is not the vindictiveness which suits these blood-thirsty Kentuckians in that proclamation, but I know this, it has brought me more than 70 deserters from Marshall's camp since the battle, men of no brains he had scared into the rebel army and whose lives are not worth to the country what the bullets would cost to kill them. This desertion has aided to disorganize his army and these poor fellows will slink off home, glad to escape the sufferings of an inglorious campaign."

At the moment Garfield's little success won recognition, but its chances for fame were almost immediately snuffed out by the considerably larger action fought by Thomas's expedition at Mill Spring, Kentucky, a few days later. This victory for the Union troops under General Thomas, a man of the fullest maturity and experience, quite eclipsed the lesser success of the Ohio volunteer colonel, but did not cause the Ohio legislature to overlook the exploits of an Ohio man. Newspapers in Ohio and elsewhere contain enthusiastic applause for the victory.

Garfield's own later judgment on the campaign was very modest. In Reid, *Ohio in the War*, he is quoted as saying: "It was a very rash and imprudent affair on my part. If I had been an officer of more experience I probably should not have made the attack. As it was, having gone into the army with the notion that fighting was our business I didn't know any better."¹ When in 1871 he revisited the Sandy valley on business he used somewhat similar language in writing to his

¹ Reid, *Ohio in the War*, Vol. I, p. 747.

wife (September 3): "Reviewing the events in the winter of 1861-2, as they now appear to me in memory and by the light of the old familiar places, I can hardly imagine how I succeeded in my campaign or how I ventured to attempt it. The country is absolutely horrible in its wildness." Reid's own judgment is worth quoting.

"His plans were based on sound military principles; the energy which he threw into their execution was thoroughly admirable and his management of the raw volunteers was such that they acquired the fullest confidence in their commander and endured the hardships of the campaign with a fortitude not often shown in the first field service of raw troops."¹

Garfield stayed with his forces at Paintsville, gathering news of Marshall's movements and sending out a cavalry reconnoissance which went as far as Piketon. Having ascertained that the Confederates had withdrawn close to the Virginia line, he asked for further instructions. While awaiting a reply, Garfield found plenty to do. On January 24 he sent out detachments to disperse marauders and stop bushwhacking and murder on the part of the inhabitants, and a few days later, getting restless over the failure of supplies to arrive, he went back in person to the base and undertook to bring a loaded steamer up the flooded river to the camp. The exploit he described in a letter which is worth quoting at some length. (January 26.)

After describing Marshall's rapid retreat and the complete disappearance of rebels from his vicinity he concluded: "I cannot see much else for us to do here. I believe I have never made a more favorable impression of myself than I have upon the Ky. regiments under my command and upon the citizens of this valley. They have the most extravagant notions of my doings here, and hereafter. Marshall, I find, had a wonderful reputation and was accounted one of the bravest men in the South. He is a graduate of West Point and was a Col. in the Mexican War, won great honors in the battle of Buena Vista, was a long time in Congress, was minister to Russia etc. etc. I should suppose he would feel

¹ Reid, *Ohio in the War*, Vol. I, p. 749.

exceedingly mortified at the result of his campaign in Ky. I have had a new adventure lately. There were some four days and nights of most violent rains and the river was so swollen that steamboats dare[d] not come up. Indeed it was a fearful sight. The river raised nearly 50 feet. We were getting short of provisions. I went down to Catlettsburg last Sunday, and ordered our boats to go up at once. The captains said it was impossible to go up and the attempt would be dangerous in the extreme. They utterly refused to try. I took command of a little steamboat and on Monday 3 o'clock P.M. started, against the warning of all the boatmen. I found that my old canal experience was then very valuable to me. I took the helm and stood at it night and day with the exception of about six hours, till Wednesday near noon when we reached this place with a load of provisions just as the last was being eaten. There were a few times in the night in the midst of the fearful current, and the drift of fallen trees sweeping down, when we came very near sinking. Once the current whirled us entirely around and drove us forty rods down stream before we could stop. The men on board implored me to stop, but I thought that our boys might be starving and I had some pride to do what I [had] undertaken and I pushed on. So you see I have turned sailor at last."

Such an episode as this, and numerous other ones related in the regimental history indicate that in two respects Garfield possessed qualities fundamentally necessary for success in commanding American volunteers in the Civil War: he was extremely solicitous for the physical comfort of his command and he was personally ready to share not only their discomforts but even their labors. Such feats as bridging Jenny's Creek, mentioned above, and this bringing of the steamer with supplies were of the kind to make an American commander the idol of his men.

On February 4 Garfield received gratifying replies to his report of the engagement. Buell had transmitted the news to Washington and on January 20 Colonel Fry, adjutant general of the Army of the Ohio, issued a formal order thanking Garfield and congratulating him on showing "the highest

qualities of a soldier, perseverance and courage." The next day, General Lorenzo Thomas, adjutant general of the Armies of the United States, telegraphed "Gen. McClellan, commanding the army, congratulates Col. Garfield upon this handsome achievement." His own hopes naturally ran high, for he suggested an advance clear across the mountains into Virginia "to strike at the great rebel railroad."¹ But Buell was not ready to have him undertake anything quite so extensive with only 2,000 men and his orders were limited to instructing him to advance to the head of the valley and secure it.

Owing to the fact that Garfield had a recurrence of "camp fever," complicated with a vaccination which "took" excessively, he was a sick man for a week, and was not able to write to his wife before February 25 nor to move in obedience to the order until a few days later. In this letter, after describing his illness, he revealed the mood of reaction which was to be expected after the first enthusiasm over victory, followed by sickness and inaction. "The fact is," he admitted, "I have, for a few days, been feeling more depressed than at any time since I entered the service. For many reasons personal to myself I have been feeling that I would be glad to be out of the perplexities of war and enter again the pursuits of peace, but I am perfectly aware that a few weeks of quiet would make me desirous of being in the strife again. Still I have no expectations of abandoning the fight until it or I am done. There are many indications now which seem to show that the rebellion is soon to be crushed. Many think it will be over by June. I, of course, am not so sanguine as to hope that."

In a letter to Rhodes (February 12) he mentioned that he had already moved the bulk of his forces to Piketon. During these weeks of waiting Garfield found time once more to reflect on the political situation, for his letters contain observations on the war and its objects which for a long time had been almost completely lacking. In them one notices the beginning of a marked change in his political attitude, caused by his contact with Southern actualities. "I have a

¹ *Official Records*, Vol. VII, p. 610.

few well-defined conclusions," he wrote, "which are forced upon me as the war advances. That this war will result fatally to slavery I have no doubt. This assurance is to me one of the brightest promises of the future. But I am equally clear that a declaration of emancipation by the administration would be a most fatal mistake. The logic of argument welded with the varied power of all the minds that have labored on this theme has not brought the people of the North even, up to the necessity. Nothing but the terrible logic of events will do it. That logic is at work and will surely do it but not yet. Gen. McClellan is weakly and wickedly conservative on this point and the President nearly as bad. But out of the very weakness and timidity of our leaders I draw the hope that God has willed it. If McClellan will discipline and mobilize our people into armies and let them meet the enemy, God will take care of the grand consequences. Let the war be conducted *for the union* till the integrity, indivisibility and glory of that union shall gather round itself all the hero-worship, pride, and power of the nation and then, perhaps not till then, they will love the union more than slavery and slay the Python." (Rhodes, February 12.)

About a week later Garfield himself went to Piketon with the last of his command, but hardly had he reached the camp when dangers of a more serious kind than those presented by Marshall's invaders descended upon the young commander and taxed his abilities to the uttermost. What happened is best described in his own words (February 23): "We did not get here until yesterday at 10 o'clock A.M. It had commenced to rain at 4 o'clock in the morning and continued to rain in fearful torrents till past midnight last night. I have never seen the fearfulness of water before. I detailed 200 men to take our stores farther up the bank and save them. We commenced early in the evening and worked till after midnight. I was conquered for the first time. In one hour the water rose twelve feet. It surrounded the camp of the 40th and they barely had time to get away their guns and ammunition and save themselves. This morning disclosed a fearful scene. The house where I am staying which is sixty

feet above the usual level of the river is now surrounded. A wild river roars around it on all sides. It is forty rods to the shore. Two large steamboats are in the principal street of the village. Houses, stacks of wheat and hay, gigantic trees, saw-logs, fences and all things that float are careering by with fearful speed. At day-break I got a horse and rode through a current which came very near sweeping me away, to look after the safety of my dear 42nd. I found them safe. The noble fellows had given up most of their tents which were on tolerably high ground to the women and children who had fled from their houses. Most of the tents of the 40th are gone. All are under water. Many horses are drowned. I hope no men are lost. It is a strange place to be in where one is utterly powerless to do anything. Three inches more and it will swash through the room where I am sitting. I tremble for the sickness and suffering which will follow. Four battles would not be so disastrous to us."

Garfield's forebodings were promptly realized, for the devastation, loss of stores and pollution of all water supplies caused a violent outbreak of sickness in his force. "So far as our stores are concerned," he wrote home (March 10), "we are rapidly recovering from the effects of the flood, but we are suffering terribly in health in consequence of the exposure incident to the high waters. There has never been so fearful a condition as our sick list exhibits. It is really alarming. There are over 400 sick in the Hospital at Ashland and I am this morning sending nearly sixty more. I hope you will not mention this outside the family. I am doing everything in my power to aid those who are sick and to prevent the well from falling sick. But this country is stripped of every comfort. We need anti-scorbutics but not a thing of the kind can be got here. Fifty have died within the last four weeks, twenty-two of them from the 42nd Regt. I declare to you there are fathers and mothers in Ohio that I hardly know how I can ever endure to meet." He narrated pathetic incidents showing the burdens he had to bear of heartening sick and frightened boys. "I dare not tell you how small a number of that noble regiment can be mustered for duty. This fighting with disease is infinitely more hor-

rible than battle. For two weeks we have had mingled snow and rain and horrible mud. I suppose we are not worse off, perhaps not so bad, as those in the Great Valley. This is the price of saving the Union. My God, what a costly sacrifice!"

Then in the next paragraph came a new and, for Garfield, a strange note, a cry for vengeance. "When I read how considerably and with what distinguished attention the Government is treating the Rebel officers who are our prisoners of war, I am fired with the deepest indignation. The 1200 Nabob officers who were allowed to wear their side-arms and be attended into Camp Chase by their slaves—and then find fault that 'Gentlemen were put into such a muddy and uncomfortable camp,' and when I remember that that camp was good enough for me and my noble boys to drill in for three months and nobody complained that we were ill used.—If the severest vengeance of outraged and insulted law is not visited upon those cursed villians who have instigated and led this rebellion, it will be the most wicked crime that can be committed. The blood of hundreds of the 18th Brigade will, before summer, be crying from the ground for vengeance."

Yet even in this moment of anxiety Garfield was able to write reassuringly to his wife, telling her not to be alarmed for him. "I have great faith in the power of will to resist disease. The efforts I have been making and must make to strengthen others will, I believe, keep me well." An episode described in one of his home letters illustrates both his affectionate solicitude for the Forty-second and his skill in keeping up their morale. "Two Hiram boys came to me last night," he said (March 10), "in tears and besought me to send them home. They said they had been taking the doctor's medicine for several days and were getting no better. They all have a terrible dread of the Hospital. Capt. Williams came with them. He broke down and cried too. I told the boys I had been wrestling with sickness myself as with a giant enemy and they must do the same. I talked to them till they felt brave and then sent them to Capt. Williams' tent to have him bathe them, soak their feet and give them hygiene pills. I am glad to say they are better this morning."

But not even his encouragement could overcome typhoid fever and both the boys died within the month.

During these painful and exhausting weeks, while Garfield's heart was wrung with anxiety for his sick men, the problem of his own future was being determined. When an officer had shown such powers of command as he had manifested it was natural that he should be given further opportunities and higher rank. The *Official Records* show that McClellan, Buell and Fremont all were desirous of utilizing him, either as a subordinate commander or as part of their armies. Simultaneously an active movement was started in Ohio to secure for him a brigadier general's commission. The effort was wholly political. Garfield's old friend, Dr. Robison, now in the Senate, attacked the matter precisely as though he were trying to get a federal collectorship or some other office in the usual line of spoils, with the active support of W. T. Bascom of the Republican state committee, Garfield's former landlord. They instantly wrote to Chase, and Robison got a petition signed by all the members of the Ohio Senate, various federal judges, and leading men.¹ "All are pushing," reported Bascom, on February 3. With the inveterate habit of regarding offices of any sort as prizes, this brigadier generalship was considered a "plum" for Ohio, and Ohio men at Washington busied themselves to help in securing it. Chase, in his journal, refers to Garfield as "made, at my instance, a Brigadier."²

Early in March Garfield received a letter from Rhodes telling him that he had been, or was to be, commissioned a brigadier general, and on March 19 the report was officially verified. "I have received the Brigadier's commission," he wrote to his wife (March 19), "of which so much has been said. It bears date of Jan. 10th—the day of the battle." But, gratifying as this advancement was, it brought Garfield as much pain as pleasure. "I hardly know," he wrote to Rhodes, "whether to be more pleased than saddened by it. It makes me very sad to think of being separated from the 42d. I

¹ Robison to Garfield, February 17.

² *Diary of S. P. Chase*, American Historical Association, 1902, p. 95.

cannot tell you how strangely and powerfully my whole being has been drawn out in love for that body of men. The very sound of the word Forty Second has a strange charm in it. But I am reassured by this thought that I have never by word or written sentence made any approach to forwarding the movement or inviting it. Had I done so I should feel I was marring the plans of God and should not succeed."

While still uncertain as to his future Garfield undertook another military expedition that shows his spirit to have been unconquered by flood, pestilence and scanty food. It had been ascertained that Marshall's forces had withdrawn to Pound Gap on the Virginia line, and thither, on March 14, Garfield led a small expedition to prevent a rumored concentration of Confederate militia. Taking 600 infantry, picked from all his regiments, and 100 cavalry, he undertook to capture the defenders, whom he estimated at 500. Sending part of his force to attack in front, he led a detachment on March 16 to outflank the Gap, "by an unfrequented path." The flanking movement partly succeeded and a brief engagement in a snowstorm, "half a dozen volleys at long range," ended in the retreat of the Confederates. Again the casualties were infinitesimal. Having destroyed the encampment, and incidentally found a number of illuminating dispatches from General Marshall which showed the demoralization of the Confederates in that region, the raiding force returned. That ended hostilities in the Big Sandy valley.

A letter of March 19 to his wife gives some particulars of this exploit: "It rained and snowed nearly all the time. I fired one shot among them and the boys say I killed one but I think and hope not. In most respects it is the completest thing we have accomplished but it takes blood to give it much place among the movements of the time. There were seven of the enemy's killed and wounded. None of our boys were hurt. Better to gain a bloodless victory. I was in my saddle and travelling on foot 18 hours of one of the days."

Shortly after this episode Buell came to a decision as to the use he wished to make of his energetic young volunteer officer. Up to March 23 he had a plan to send him with other

troops against Cumberland Gap, but two days later he changed his mind and notified Stanton, Secretary of War: "I have concluded to call General Garfield into service here and send General Morgan, who has just reported, to Cumberland Gap. Both are good officers and there are circumstances which make this arrangement preferable to the one I contemplated first."¹

On March 19 an order was sent to Garfield to leave the Fortieth Ohio, Sixteenth Kentucky and the cavalry under Colonel Cranor, and to proceed with the rest to Bardstown, Kentucky, thus breaking up the Eighteenth Brigade. So with a heavy heart and in the midst of constant anxiety Garfield led his command out of the Sandy valley while large numbers were still laid low with typhoid and camp fever. "I should be exceedingly glad to go home and see you," he wrote home from Cincinnati, "but I know it is of no use to think of it. The sickness is still fearful in the Brigade and when a man gets sick there seems to come over him a conviction that he is going to die and that hastens his death. Capt. F. A. Williams is very sick with the typhoid fever. I have brought him here and got a good private house for him. I don't know how I could endure his loss, should he die. He is one of my very best officers. I am in an agony of anxiety about him. Still he is not past strong hope of recovery. I know nothing as yet of our future destination. I presume, however, it will be with the grand army. I hope I shall have a few weeks to recruit my men and drill them in Brigade movements, before we get into column again. It is due to me. I cannot tell you how I dread the approach of the hot season away in South for my men."

When he reached Louisville the blow that he most feared fell upon him, for he learned that he was to leave the Forty-second. A letter of April 2 to his wife revealed the anguish in his soul. "I have never so fully realized the fickleness of Fortune and the chances and changes of war as this morning. I arrived here in the night,—last night—with three regiments, all promising ourselves great pleasure in a new and broader field of operations. Ten minutes after my arri-

¹ *Official Records*, Vol. XII, p. 616.

val dispatches were placed in my hands ordering my regiments turned over to the command of Gen. Morgan and myself to report to Gen. Buell at Nashville, or wherever he may be in the field. No hint is given of my destination but it is supposed I am to be assigned a command in the forces that are now gathering to attack Corinth. No matter—in fifteen minutes I leave. I have wakened Col. Sheldon and Maj. Pardee and bid them goodbye. I dare not let the 42d regiment know I am going. It might make a scene, I know it would nearly break me down. Whether I shall ever see them again in the war I cannot tell. One thing is sure, I am their General no more. The omnibus is at the door. Farewell.”

So ended Garfield's connection with “his own” regiment and so ended his only independent command. Before passing on it may be said that while it was in no way a remarkable achievement, it was none the less highly creditable for a young volunteer officer, leading almost perfectly raw troops. He had accomplished the task assigned him, he had shown venturesomeness and real pugnacity, and had done all that anyone in his position could do to mitigate the sufferings of his ill-provided men during the dismal weeks of camping in the valley. And at the very end he had elasticity enough to make a further aggressive stroke, trifling, it is true, but a real one. “Garfield's brigade,” said J. D. Cox,¹ “constituted a little army by itself and all the problems of strategy and tactics must be settled without guidance or assistance from another. The way in which he acquitted himself was recognized as proving that he had true military capacity, as well as the courage, both moral and physical, which is needed to give a successful result to a well-planned campaign.” Such qualities were not over and above common in the Union army in 1861-1862, the general temper of officers being cautious and defensive. Under any system of wise selection and promotion of officers, Garfield would have been marked for further trial and sent to repeat his success on a larger scale. As it was, he never again to the end of his military service had the scope or responsibility to show his capacities.

¹ “Early Life of J. A. Garfield,” in *Society of Army of Cumberland*, 1882, p. 99.

CHAPTER VII
THE TWENTIETH BRIGADE, ELECTION TO
CONGRESS

1862

THE military situation when Garfield was summoned to join Buell's army was as follows: his success at Paintsville on January 10 and Thomas's victory at Mill Spring on January 20 had been wholly eclipsed by the surprising triumphs of the forces under Grant and Flag-Officer Foote, who had taken Forts Henry and Donaldson, February 6-16, opening up both the Cumberland and Tennessee rivers and causing the Confederates to fall back out of Kentucky from in front of Buell's army as well as of Grant's. To Halleck, under whom Grant had fought, was now given the supreme command in the West, and in obedience to his orders Buell's troops were pushing southwestward across Kentucky and Tennessee to make a junction at Pittsburg Landing on the Tennessee River with Grant's command, which was confronted by the main Confederate force.

The movement was well under way by the time Garfield reached Louisville, and to join Buell he was compelled to push rapidly southward, in the wake of the army. In a letter of April 4 he described his journey: "In camp 48 miles south of Columbia April 4. If my life were not so much like a series of strange and wild dreams I should be inclined to think I had been dreaming during the last few days." After a journey by train to Columbia, "Gen. Negley gave me an escort consisting of one sergeant and eight cavalymen, and furnished me a trooper's horse. The beast would not gallop but was a very fast and hard trotter. Till dark we passed through one of the most delightful tracts of country I have ever seen. The residences of Gen. Pillow and Rt. Rev. Maj. Gen. Polk are very magnificent. The ditch digging General is worth two millions of dollars. Making our way past camps

and transportation wagons almost innumerable, we reached the Head Quarters of Gen. Thomas at ten o'clock where I obtained a new escort but kept the hard trotter and in an hour I was in the saddle. Gen. Buell was moving on to the front of the Grand Army as rapidly as he could and I knew my only way to catch him was to go in the night. At 3:30 o'clock in the morning I reached Gen. Buell's tent 33 miles South of Columbia. In half an hour the General was up and after taking breakfast with him, he assigned me to the 20th Brigade in the 6th Division. The men were already under arms and were to march at 6 o'clock. You can imagine how well prepared I was in regard to general outfit. Horse, servants, books, sword, pistols, blankets, and mess chest were in Louisville, and my trunk committed to the uncertain chances of a Quartermaster's wagon at Columbia. I had no baggage but my overcoat and that was needed, for the rain began to fall in torrents by six.

"The Gen. ordered a trooper to dismount and give me his horse which trotted, only not so hard as my equine companion of the night before. Thus mounted I assumed command of the 20th Brigade, consisting of the 64th and 65th Ohio and the 13th Mich. and the 51st Indiana Regiments. The Col. who had been in command (a West Pointer) delivered the Brigade to me and away we went. After a march of 15 miles I have encamped in a large field in the regular order of encampment and have got supper with one of the colonels. I have borrowed a blanket and am now ready and willing to lie down and rest, only I thought I would write a word to you before I slept. The two Ohio bands have just been before my tent serenading me, I hardly know for what, only they seem to have heard of me and appear glad that I am here. But no matter what other regiments may be to me I mourn like a bereaved lover for my dear old 42nd. In the midst of this great army I am alone. The tent is very large and is more than 600 miles from you and Trot whose I am with a love that reaches out through the night and the distance and asks God's blessing upon you." (April 4.)

The body of troops which Garfield now commanded was destined to a high reputation under the "West Pointer"

Colonel Harker, but, as will be seen, its principal duties while under Garfield's command were to be marching and intrenching. In it Garfield discovered several Disciples and former Hiram students and his own first cousin, Ellis Ballou, a sergeant in the Sixty-fifth Ohio. The regimental history of the two Ohio organizations has this to say about Garfield's assumption of command: "On the morning of April 4, a new officer appeared at the head of the 20th brigade—General James A. Garfield—Brave, chivalrous and soldierly, of commanding appearance, his very presence was, as he himself once said of Phil Sheridan, an inspiration. No general was ever more considerate of the comfort and well-being of his soldiers. Within a fortnight from the day he assumed command he possessed the confidence and esteem of every officer and soldier in the brigade."¹ But no amount of confidence or respect on the part of his new subordinates could make up for the loss of the Forty-second, the regiment he had himself created.

Garfield had no sooner assumed command of his brigade than he was called upon to lead it into battle, for it was on April 6 that Johnston, the Confederate commander, made his almost successful effort to crush Grant's army before the two Union armies could unite. Garfield wrote to his sister (April 11): "After marching all day Saturday we got orders to leave behind all our baggage and hurry through as rapidly as possible. We marched all night Sunday. All day and night we could hear the cannon roaring ahead." Bivouacing in the woods, under disconcerting showers, they pushed on the next day, journeyed the last few miles on a river steamboat, reached Pittsburg Landing at 1 p.m. and went at once into action. By this time the battle was definitely turning into a Union success, for the exhausted Confederates under Beauregard were beginning to withdraw over the ground they had gained the day before, and the fighting was assuming the aspect of rear-guard defense. Garfield described his own part in a letter of April 9. "We landed from the steamers at a place called Pittsburg, nine miles above Savannah, about half past one o'clock. The

¹ W. F. Hinman, *The Story of the Sherman Brigade*, p. 143.

battle had been raging since early dawn and the enemy were just beginning to fall back slowly. Gen. Wood met orders for us to proceed to the front with all possible dispatch. I hurried my Brigade on and reached the front before three o'clock. I was there halted to await further orders. For an hour we stood amid the roar of the battle, the shells bursting around us occasionally and the grape shot falling on all sides of us and of my staff. We had ridden forward to watch the indications and await our orders—but the tide [of] battle swept on and as the sun went down our division was ordered to the extreme front where we bivouaced during the worst night of mud and rain I ever saw." The regimental historian of the Sixty-fourth Ohio draws "a picture of him and Col. Harker sitting together on a log with one dripping blanket over their shoulders."¹

For the first time Garfield had now seen the results of actual hard fighting, and the romance of war, which still lingered after the almost bloodless successes of his Sandy valley operations, disappeared in the face of the ghastly facts. "On the whole," he commented (April 9), "this is no doubt the bloodiest battle ever fought on this continent, in which has been mingled on our side both the worst and the best of generalship, the most noble bravery and the most contemptible cowardice." Garfield then sketched the battle, saying that Grant was "surprised by an overwhelming force of the enemy" and "by some criminal neglect,—not yet explained,—their approach was not discovered till fifteen minutes before the attack." According to Garfield, Grant's army was saved only by the fire of two gunboats at Pittsburg Landing. "Thus night closed over a most disastrous day for our arms and our honor." On the next day the arrival of Buell turned the scale. "As night closed in, our line of battle five miles in length, had swept the enemy back over a space of six miles. Such a scene as this 30 square miles presents beggars all attempts at description. If I live to meet you again I will attempt to tell something of its horrors. God has been good to me, and I am yet spared." In his next letter he recurred again to the impression made on him

¹ Hinman, *The Story of the Sherman Brigade*, p. 147.

by the battlefield of Shiloh. "The horrible sights I have witnessed on this field, I can never describe. No blaze of glory that flashed around the magnificent triumphs of war can ever atone for the unwritten and unutterable horrors of the scene of carnage." (April 21.)

The only loss suffered by Garfield's command was incurred the day after the battle. "Yesterday morning," he said, "we pursued the enemy in an armed reconnoissance between three and four miles, when we were attacked by 800 Texas Rangers and as many more Alabama cavalry. They made a desperate attack, throwing back our advance (a regt. of cavalry and one of infantry) killing 19 and wounding 40 with nearly an equal loss on their side. They were, however, soon driven back and their camp destroyed." (April 9.)

Garfield now for the first time had a chance to settle himself with his command and to send for his personal equipment. His situation was the reverse of comfortable, in consequence of his hasty dash to join Buell's army. "My trunk," he wrote home (April 21), "I was obliged to leave at Columbia to be brought forward on a government wagon but I have heard nothing of it and fear I never shall. It contained all my clothing, letters, commission etc., so that I have not even a change. . . . I do not hear from my horse or from Green. I hear incidentally that my boy Jim, who came over to me at the battle of Middle Creek was kidnapped at Louisville, but was rescued by a writ of habeas corpus. This circumstance caused a panic among the colored men connected with the 42nd and Prof. went home, partly because he was sick. The Major wrote me he believed it was because I was gone. At last accounts Green was feeling blue about coming down here and I am inclined to think he thought prudence the better part of valor and has gone home. Still I hope to see him and my horse 'Bill.' I have telegraphed to Capt. Plumb and Heaton, now in Cincinnati, to send for my horse 'Harry' now in Elyria." On May 1 Garfield was fortunately able to write to his wife: "I have just today got my trunk and so farewell to the flannel shirt that I have worn just 30 days. I am delighted to see the old trunk, soiled and bruised as it is."

Next followed the Corinth campaign. General Halleck, commanding the united armies of Grant and Buell, moved against the Confederates, who were concentrated behind fortifications about twelve miles from the Shiloh battlefield. Halleck had more than 100,000 men; Beauregard not over half that number; yet the Union commander chose to advance as though confronted by substantially equal forces, venturing on no flanking movements, holding his whole army closely together as if anticipating an attack, digging in-trenchments and building roads with the deliberation and caution which characterize siege operations. Under these circumstances Garfield's part in the proceedings became little more than that of a cog in the military machine. No longer responsible for the conduct of anything, he wrote reports only after an engagement and instead of planning movements, issuing orders and proclamations and attracting attention he acted merely to carry out the commands of his superiors. The movements of his brigade can be traced in the *Official Records* only through the reports of his division commander or through infrequent references in dispatches.

The advance from the camp near Shiloh began April 29 and the operations of the Sixth Division, including Garfield's Brigade, were road building, posting guards and in-trenching. Garfield's command is mentioned as taking its turn with others in rotation in road building and on one such occasion it had a slight skirmish, to which Garfield referred in a home letter. But for the most part it was a time of the dulllest and most deadening routine. Occasional anecdotes show that at this time the Disciple teacher and preacher in him had not wholly disappeared. On the morning after the battle of Shiloh the careless firing of a gun led to a panic discharge by the whole brigade and brought all the commanding officers on the scene in a towering rage. General Wood, division commander, poured forth a stream of profanity, Colonel Harker, commanding the Sixty-fourth Ohio, swore for the only time on record. "General Garfield's robust voice was also heard. He had never used profane language, but on this occasion he seemed to enjoy hearing others who were proficient in the art of swearing." After

they had been sufficiently browbeaten, Garfield brought them back to their self-respect by a "stirring speech."¹

Another episode still more clearly reveals the former teacher and preacher. A lieutenant and ten men, on reporting for assignment at eight in the morning, found the commander asleep and while waiting for him to awake, one of the men discovered a female opossum with young. General Garfield, arising, "began giving his instructions when his eyes caught sight of this novel equipment. Apparently with the deepest interest he stood for ten minutes in his night clothes discussing the Divine wisdom in the adaptation of animal life to its condition, stating that the kangaroo and the opossum were the only species of animals having a safe or pouch provided to store for a season their helpless offspring. Being reminded that we were awaiting orders, he apologized for his unmilitary talk and appearance and closed the interview by telling us in a few words what to do."²

During these weeks of comparative stagnation Garfield began to undergo a sharp reaction from his enthusiasm after the Sandy Valley campaign. The first shock he received came from contact with the professional army officers. "My position here," he wrote to Rhodes (May 1), "is in some respects very unpleasant though General B. designed to compliment me by calling me here. I am unfortunately under the immediate command of Gen. Wood, a very narrow, impetuous, proslavery man in whose prudence, and patriotism and brains I have but very little confidence; and a shamefully rough, blasphemous man, quite destitute of fine or manly feelings. My heart and hope have been down into the depths," he went on, "since I came here. I find an attempt so persistent and almost universal that I have come to believe there is something amounting to a conspiracy among leading officers—especially those of the Regular Army—to table the whole question of anti-slavery and throw as much discredit on it as upon treason. This purpose is seen clearly in their words and acts. I have been made deeply indignant. I find myself coming nearer and nearer to downright Aboli-

¹ Hinman, *The Story of the Sherman Brigade*, pp. 152-154.

² *Ibid.*, p. 169.

tionism. But here I have found consolation and hope. I find the rank and file of the army steadily and surely becoming imbued with sympathy for slaves and hatred for slavery. A command in the army is a sort of tyranny and in a narrow and ignoble mind engenders a despotic spirit which makes him sympathize with slavery and slave holders. There is at the same time in the position of a soldier in the ranks that which makes him feel the abridgment of liberty and the power of tyranny. Before God I here record my conviction that the spirit of Slavery is the soul of the rebellion and the incarnate devil which must be cast out before we can trust in any peace as lasting and secure. It may be a part of God's plan to lengthen out this war until our whole army has been sufficiently outraged by the haughty tyranny of pro-slavery officers . . . that they will bring back into civil life a healthy and vigorous sentiment that shall make itself felt at the ballot box and in social life for the glory of humanity and the honor of the country."

Hayes's diary under date of June 5, 1862, speaks of hearing a letter from Garfield to Cox "in which he speaks of the want of sympathy among army officers with the cause of the war; that they say Seward Chase and Sumner are more to blame than Davis and Toombs! General Sherman said he was 'ashamed to acknowledge that he had a brother who was one of those damned Black Republicans.'"¹

The second shock that Garfield was destined to receive, a complete disillusionment regarding the military capacity of his army commanders, was slower to arrive. For some time after the battle of Shiloh he confidently expected an advance and another great battle in the vicinity of the Confederate stronghold, Corinth. He wrote to his wife (May 1) that the army had been held back by constant rain, "but I believe the rainy season is now nearly over and we shall continue the advance movement which we began two days ago. The whole of the great army will move forward, as we now think, to fight another great battle. I do not see how a fight can be avoided except by the flight of the rebels, which we have no right to expect."

¹ C. R. Williams, *Life of R. B. Hayes*, Vol. I, p. 179.

To Rhodes (May 1): "We have lately advanced five miles and are now within cannon-shot of the Mississippi-Alabama line. The old Hyrcanian Forest is not more dense and mysterious than this. Right in the midst of these clustered trees we frequently come upon a deserted cotton field with its dead stalks and ruins of an old house and its surrounding negro huts. The enemy seems to be retiring. I believe the decisive battle is yet to be fought or rather I begin to believe it must be a series of battles rather than any one battle. There is still an immense stretch of country between here and the Gulf which it will take a long time to occupy. It is rumored that I am to be placed in command of a division, though from the peculiar condition of things here at this time I don't think it can be done at present. There is so much red tape here, everything going through so many hands, I don't feel as though I can personally accomplish much where I am, but yet I will try."

Three days later the army was again tense with expectation of a battle. "At 5 o'clock yesterday morning," he wrote home (May 4), "we broke up our encampment and moved forward to this place—or rather this deserted field. I pitched my tent in a little sassafrass grove and here we received orders to prepare for battle early next day (that is today.) About 4:30 o'clock in the afternoon a fierce cannonading began a few miles to the left. We turned out and stood under arms but in about an hour the cannonading ceased. We passed the night very pleasantly, drank sassafrass tea for breakfast and are now waiting orders to move forward. The fight last evening may have changed the aspect of affairs to such an extent that we may not move forward today. I hope not, for there is a sentiment wide spread in the army, even among those who are hard men and blasphemous, that battles begun on the Lord's day are not a blessing to the attacking party."

"The past night and the morning thus far have been strangely quiet for the camp of a great army. There is the peculiar quiet and subdued manner which characterizes men who are on the eve of great events in which their lives are at stake. I rode along in the woods this morning, and saw little

groups here and there seated in the leaves in low earnest conversation, sometimes a little group with a bible in their midst, sometimes a man by himself reading a pocket-worn letter. Men who are usually rough address each other with more than usual gentleness of manner. All this tells me that these men will fight with great desperation. Everything indicates a very great battle. There has been no battle where the preparations were on so gigantic a scale as this. God grant that this may be the last great bloody sacrifice of the war in the Mississippi Valley."

In the next letters the same expectation appears, but with signs of impatience at the prolonged delay. On May 8 Garfield had a personal exploit to describe. "I was out with my brigade a few days ago," he wrote to his mother, "beyond the Mississippi line and met a considerable force of the rebels. They fired three cannon shot (shell) at us but didn't do any harm. I captured two of them and drove the rest back. One rebel fired at me when I was not more than 20 rods from him, but he did not take good aim and so I am still spared to try them again. I don't want you to feel uneasy about me," he continued. "You want me to do my duty as much as I want to do it, and if I do it well and come through safe we will all be glad. If I should not be permitted to survive the war, you will, I hope, still have the satisfaction of knowing that I did not flinch in the hour of danger. Ellis is in my Brigade and is well. George Garfield is in the same division and I see him almost every day. He is a good soldier, is a sergeant and is well liked by his officers."

On May 13 he was still hopeful. After describing how his brigade had been moved "from the Hamburg and Corinth road around to the Hamburg and Farmington road," he remarked: "Though the enemy still greatly outnumber us, we have confidence in our superior discipline. I think it is the policy to cut off the enemy's retreat by river and rail and force him to a general battle or surrender. His river egress is nearly shut up and all his Rail Road avenues of retreat, except the direct Southern one are in our grasp. It would be wiser for us to consume a month in hemming him in than it would be to dash upon him and beat him in battle

only to allow him to slip out at the back door and make another stand further back. His army cannot number less than 150,000 men, but a large part of that force is made up of conscripts who neither serve willingly nor intelligently." This probably repeats the camp gossip which in this case was more than usually exaggerated, giving the Confederates fully three times their actual number. Later in the war Garfield would not have been so badly misled.

In this letter Garfield replied to some remarks of his wife upon the possible effect of the war on his tastes. "I have not much fear that this wild life will unfit me for the joys of peace which I so much long for. I greatly desire to see the end of it and lay aside this terrible work. Still it would be just like my perverse nature if I should ever see quiet again, to be restless and long for turbulence. There will probably be enough turbulence to satisfy the most storm-loving disposition for [the] next few years. I am still grieved at not hearing from the 42nd. When you write tell me what you hear from them."

To Rhodes (May 19): "In the field, three miles from Corinth. We are now locating our permanent camp and erecting defensive works, from which we shall go out light armed and without baggage. It is wonderful with what a spirit and enterprise our soldiers carry on this war of outposts. For two days the pickets of the two armies have been watching each other across large wheatfields and sharpshooters have been hunting each other with the eagerness and nonchalance that we would hunt squirrels. They creep out behind stumps and trees and fire away at each other, laughing as merrily as though it were a holiday sport. There are nearly a dozen in all killed and wounded and yet the boys keep on as if nothing had occurred that was in the least unpleasant. Now, while I write there is a constant cracking of Springfield rifles out on the picket lines, a little more than a half mile distant. The exciting nature of our work keeps almost every one from reflecting on the terrible phases of our work. I cannot help feeling a strange fascination for witnessing the operations of our pickets. I was out nearly all yesterday watching the effects of our shots and watching

the operations of the enemy through my field glasses. I suppose I have heard 200 rifle shots since I began this letter.

"I am growing exceedingly anxious to see the end of this war. I begin to feel I am losing great opportunities for growth. When I do get time for thought I find myself looking back to what I have acquired as food for reflection, rather than looking around me at what I am now grasping.

. . . Still if I live through this war, it will have been of very great service to my mind to have been plunged into the midst of this peculiar kind of activity and I shall return to intellectual life with greater zest." Thus did Garfield alternately look back on his old ambitions and at the same moment realize that he was heading in a new direction.

A letter to Miss Booth, written the next day, gives a lively description of his functions during this peculiar campaign, and shows how he was beginning to feel a fatherly interest in his new Ohio soldiers. "An order came from Gen. Halleck for us to intrench our position. I threw 3½ regiments forward, ran a line for half a mile through a point of woods and along a crest in a field . . . and before sunset we had completed a rifle trench, which, in connection with the work of other Divisions makes a line of four or five miles. My advanced regiment was thrown forward a quarter of a mile beyond our work and a constant skirmishing was kept up which toward evening grew quite warm. A part of my line was at one time driven back but was immediately reinforced. . . . The night was comparatively quiet but I was awakened by the roar of distant cannon and rode out three miles along the lines. I could plainly hear the drums of the enemy. Three deserters came in to me last night while I was out with my advance. They were all northerners and were greatly rejoiced to get away. One was an Ohio boy, from Sandusky, who had been forced into the rebel service at New Orleans. He found a brother in the 3d Ohio cavalry here, whom he had not seen for nine years. The other two were Germans, noble fellows, one from St. Louis and one from Detroit. I love the Germans more and more every month. They report the rebels on short ration and say we shall be attacked by them soon.

"I cannot describe the constant occurrence of events which

would be of the most exciting character. I have heard a number of cannon and hundreds of small-arms since I began this letter. . . . 9 o'clock P.M. Another busy day. We have finished the intrenchments, cut away the underbrush and made roads leading from our camps to the trenches. My men took the log house and burned it. One of our men was wounded but my 64th boys placed four rebels *hors du combat*. It is still raining and my poor 64th are away in the storm. Now and then a gun booms through the darkness. We stand under arms from 4 o'clock in the morning till broad daylight. This we have done for nearly a month. . . . Events are every hour thickening here and the great contest must come very soon, if it comes at all. I believe the enemy will fight and with great fierceness."

A week later Garfield reported a calming down of the skirmishing. "For three days picket firing has nearly ceased by common consent. Indeed the pickets are becoming so friendly that they frequently go out into an open field in front and sit down and chat together between the lines. We have been building heavy intrenchments and it looks now as though we were to make the regular approaches of a siege. . . . I would be very glad if this cup might be permitted to pass and we not drink it. But all speculations as [to] the time, place, mode and result of so great a battle are vain. My health is good. Capt. Plumb brought Green and my two horses and also a good cook. For the first time since I left Camp Chase I am living well in the eating line. We have a French cook who gets up soups etc.—and you know when I have good soup my wants are nearly all supplied. I was delighted to see my horses again and I really fancied they knew me, and I am sure they will soon for they each get hugged a half dozen times a day."

The informal truce described by Garfield must have been interrupted almost immediately, for in a letter to Austin on May 28 he wrote: "A fight has been raging all day along a front of more than five miles. It has been mainly skirmishing and artillery work and I have held my brigade in the trenches as a part of the reserve. . . . I assure you the blessings of peace, home, friends, Christianity, and Christian

worship never seemed so dear and inestimable to me as they do now in the moments of calm between the events of this terrible war. . . . Indeed it is the glory of volunteer life to perform a terrible and disagreeable duty, hoping to live through it and return as soon as possible to his old life. An officer in the regular army adopts war as a profession and makes fighting his trade. War is his harvest, peace is his famine. The fate of Corinth must soon be decided. If the enemy still determines to maintain himself at Corinth, there must be one of the bloodiest battles of the war. If he retreats, his forces will be greatly disheartened and demoralized and our army will be chagrined at losing the game we have been trying to bag for more than 50 days since the battle of Shiloh."

To Rhodes he reported (May 29): "My relations are more pleasant than heretofore. Gen. Buell frequently calls on me for special service and Gen. Wood seems to feel as though he needed my aid in managing the Division. He has always treated me with respect. He is only a tyrant when he dares to be. He could not live and treat me as he has treated some officers."

But the battle for which Garfield had constantly waited for so many weeks never occurred, since Beauregard, feeling unable to risk a general engagement and knowing that to stand a siege would mean the loss of his army, decided to withdraw. On May 30, to be free from disturbance, he caused "deserters" to spread the rumor in the Union camp that a Confederate attack was impending. General Wood in his reports mentions sending General Garfield to the outposts to satisfy himself of the truth of the report and saying that "he returned about midnight, satisfied of its general correctness."¹ Needless to say there was no attack and the next day Union pickets found Corinth abandoned. Halleck did not make any serious attempt at pursuit, but after following the Confederates a few miles caused his army to go into camp, claiming that the objective of the campaign had been attained.

Garfield's indignation at Halleck's strategy knew no

¹ *Official Records*, Vol. X, pt. i, p. 708.

bounds. "Strangely enough," he wrote to Rhodes (June 10), "we do not yet know where the rebel army have gone. This of itself, fixed disgrace upon our generalship. It makes me indignant to see the attempts made by General Halleck to show that 'the enemy were furiously cannonaded and forced to make a hurried and disastrous retreat.' There could be no greater falsehood. Our cannonading was wholly a work of outposts. We threw shells into the bushes with light artillery, but not one shot was fired from any of the hundred heavy siege guns that for ten days could have filled Corinth with shells. In any one of these ten days in which our splendid army lay chafing with impatience and asking to be led to battle, a column of 25,000 men could have made a reconnaissance which would have compelled a full knowledge of the enemy's works, strength and operations; but no such reconnaissance was permitted, and no officer or soldier of our army even saw the enemy's outer earthworks till the whole camp was deserted."

For two weeks now the Union army was allowed by Halleck to relapse into complete inaction, satisfied apparently with the barren success of having forced the evacuation of Corinth. To add to the indignation Garfield felt at this futility, he was now subjected, as they lay in camp, to "a severe attack of dysentery and camp fever," which laid him low for a week and refused to clear up even when he was able once more to resume activity.

It should be said that at all times Garfield's digestion was his weak point. Even when peacefully living at home he was liable to attacks of illness and from the moment he entered the army he was more or less chronically subject to dysentery. Now and then, by exercise of rigid care and severe abstention, he would secure a free period, but his letters constantly report renewed attacks. This one was the severest yet and it came on after his brigade had occupied the Confederate intrenchments. "I have fancied," he wrote to Rhodes (June 10), "that the two weeks' breathing the breath of the great rebel camp and with all its sickness and offal has half poisoned my system." While he was still sick he wrote to his sister Mary Larrabee from his camp at Iuka describing his

illness and his camp equipment. He sent a little sketch plan of the arrangement of his tent and told about his horses. "Every morning since I have been sick, Green brings them to see me. They put their noses down in a very affectionate way and I fancy they know I am not quite well. They are noble horses and I am greatly attached to them. They have never injured me although 'Aunt Eliza' thought I would have to be tied on. One of them (Billy) was with me in the battle of Middle Creek. . . . I am cheerful and happy as any one can be in such a fierce business as killing men."

The tame ending of the Corinth campaign and the manner in which General Halleck allowed his army to sink into quiescence after the retreat of the Confederates brought Garfield's patience to its end. It seemed to him that everything for which he entered the army had been abandoned or shelved by the generals commanding the Union forces, and when this impression had taken hold of him it was inevitably followed by a strong desire on his part to escape from a situation which he regarded as no longer worth anything. The opening which presented itself at this juncture was that of an election to Congress. Rhodes was the first to make the suggestion, saying that by merely signifying his willingness to accept the nomination it would drop into his hands.¹

This was in no small part due to the new political situation in the Western Reserve, which was such as to render the defeat of the sitting member, John Hutchins of Warren, by no means an impossibility. In the first place, there was a new district, composed of five counties, of which three—Ashtabula, Trumbull and Mahoning—had long been together, but the other two, Geauga and Portage, had been in the eighteenth and nineteenth districts respectively. Hutchins, now serving his second term, was from Warren in Trumbull County, where his chief strength lay, but was unpopular with his own party in Ashtabula County, whose long-time representative, Joshua R. Giddings, he had ousted from the nomination in 1858, after he had held the seat twenty years. On Portage and Geauga counties Hutchins had no claim whatsoever, and in view of the general situation

¹ Rhodes to Garfield, May 9.

it was felt that the Republican convention for the newly organized district was starting with a clean slate. Any "prominent men" from any one of the five counties might aspire to the nomination with an equal chance. For this reason, men in Garfield's county, Portage, in looking for a candidate from their locality, thought naturally of their rising young state senator, who had won some distinction at Columbus, and since then had gained prominence in the war. He seemed to have all the qualities of a good campaigner.

Garfield's reply to Rhodes showed mixed emotions (May 19): "I dare not think of Congress now, though I should be pleased to take part in the legislation of the next few years. If the people should of their own motion see fit to call me to that place, of course, I should be greatly pleased, but it seems to me now it would be almost a mockery for me to lay any plans for a life over which I have so little control, and on the continuance of which I have no pledges." Ten days later, however, in response to another letter from Rhodes, he spoke out more plainly. "I cannot but feel an interest in what you say in reference to Congress and I am free to confess that I should like to be a member of the next one. Please write to me about it. I remember to have promised not to use the military as a stepping stone to politics and I shall make no effort. But if the people want me, they can say so, even if I should not be out of the army until December." So, in language nearly identical with that he had used when the idea of his candidacy for the state Senate was broached, Garfield announced his readiness to return to politics. That this was due to no other cause than his rising distaste with the Northern conduct of the war, his letters make abundantly manifest.

By the second week in June Halleck had decided on a fresh task for Buell's army, including Wood's division and Garfield's brigade. The latter described it in several letters. "Shortly after Corinth was evacuated," he wrote to his sister (June 7) from Iuka, "we were sent to this place, about 30 miles east of Corinth to repair some railroad bridges that were burned. . . . I think we shall refit the Memphis and Charleston Railroad and go over and liberate East Tennes-

see. That is now our intention." A few days later he repeated this to his mother, adding, "I think it is a healthier country, with better air and water than here. Today," he went on (June 12), "is Commencement Day and I suppose you are at Hiram. It is the first time I have been absent since 1856. I had hoped the war would be ended by this time. . . . It is ten months today since I joined the army and if our Generals don't manage better than they did here at Corinth it will be ten months more before the war is ended. I believe, however, the heaviest of the fighting is over, that is, if McClellan succeeds in beating the rebels at Richmond."

Garfield's sole duties were the routine command of his troops as they plodded along or worked on the damaged railroads, and his mind, turning over the dull futility of the whole performance, grew more and more disgusted, while the desire to escape from the meaningless tedium into active political service developed rapidly into keen eagerness. An interchange of letters between Garfield, Rhodes and Austin followed, in which the foundations were definitely laid for his candidacy before the Republican District Convention, to meet in September. Rhodes wrote May 25 urging him to return and seek the place openly. To this Garfield replied frankly.

"While a battle was imminent I felt my duty to meet the issue was paramount to every other consideration. If now the war in the west is substantially ended, and its future operations are to consist of holding positions here and there and keeping down guerrillas, then I shall feel that I am doing the country little good and myself but little credit. I confess freely as a matter of choice, I would greatly prefer a seat in Congress to any place in the army or indeed to any place which West Point management will be likely to assign me. . . . I believe I entered the service with patriotic motives and in good faith and with no small struggle made an offering of myself. I cannot for a moment think of taking any course which may even by inference throw a shadow of suspicion upon those motives, as being for political and demagogical purposes. And should I resign, go home and seek the nomination to Congress it seems to me that the whole

year's work would be misconstrued. . . . No, I have concluded that I will take no steps whatever in the matter and will only think of the thing in the very improbable event of its being spontaneously tendered to me in my absence." (June 10.)

Garfield next wrote from Tuscumbia (June 14). "We reached this place early this morning having marched since daylight. We spend the day here, taking in a supply of forage and provisions. We shall move on tomorrow morning. Our immediate destination is Decatur. It is very severe on our poor boys to march in such hot weather in this sultry climate. For two days we have passed through a splendid country. Great plantations with magnificent residences fill this rich valley of Tuscumbia. No one who sees the splendor and luxury of these wealthy planters' homes can fail to see that the 'Peculiar Institution' has great charms for the rich and yet no one can fail to see that it is the poor man's bane. We pass these fine plantations and see the slaves toiling for masters and masters' sons who are in the rebel army fighting us and we let them stay at their toil. The first day's march nearly exhausted me. Yesterday I stood it better."

On June 25 Garfield wrote to Austin an important letter, which deserves quotation at some length. In addition to repeating the same ideas that he had expressed to Rhodes, regarding his invincible scruples against working for himself, he honestly laid before his friend and protector his ambitions and his intentions.

"Concerning my future, of which you have spoken, I am always glad to hear your views and to consult your judgment. As you have requested it I will speak without reserve. I am serving in my present capacity cheerfully and, I hope, acceptably to the country and I am willing still to do so. I entered the service in good faith, at some considerable sacrifice of my own plans and purposes and I am wholly unwilling to do anything which will throw a doubt upon the motives which have governed me and make me appear to have done this only to serve myself to something else. I would far rather die here. . . . I would not therefore abandon my work here to seek another field even if it were ten-fold more

honorable, if by so doing I should seem to shrink from duty. But on the other hand I will say that while the war promises to be a long one, it still appears to me that the great battles of the war have been fought or will have been fought, as soon as the Richmond question is settled. To remain in the army and follow the military as a profession was never any part of my plan. I have always intended and still intend to resign my commission as soon as the active part of the war is done.

"It seems to me that the successful ending of the war is the smaller of the two tasks imposed upon the government. There must be a readjustment of our public policy and management. There will spring up out of this war a score of new questions and new dangers. The settlement of these will be of even more vital importance than the ending of the war. I do not hesitate to tell *you* that I believe I could do some service in Congress in that work and I should prefer that to continuing in the army. I have not expected a nomination. I have said nothing about it except in answer to a letter from Prof. Rhodes. . . . I cannot say what is best under the circumstances, so well as you can. Should the people, of their own motion, without any suggestions from me, choose to nominate me to Congress, I should esteem it a mark of high favor. But I should be unwilling that my name should go before a convention and be rejected. I must therefore commit the decision of this matter wholly to my friends, and I particularly desire you to help me in determining whether I shall allow my name to be presented or not. . . . I hope you will not think that I feel any impatient anxiety on the subject. I do not. Indeed I have more than once shrunk from the thought of the dangers which will beset the course of any man who shall buffet the next stormy four years of public life."

It is not too much to say that in this letter Garfield took a decisive step in his life, not merely as to his expressed willingness to run for Congress, coupled with strict scruples as to the part he was willing to play in paving the way, but chiefly in placing his political fate in the hands of Harmon Austin, who from this moment was to be his guide, adviser and political manager all his days.

During July the Union forces laboriously trudged eastward in the heat, while Garfield's physical condition failed to improve and his depression increased day by day. His letters during this month show without need of comment both his occupations and his bitter reflections. The only gleam of hope lay in the possibility of escaping through an election to Congress. The direct contact with slavery shocked him to the depth of his nature, and the positively proslavery attitude of many officers of the army stirred his almost uncontrollable indignation. To Austin (June 25) he wrote: "My heart sinks down very low when I see the mode in which the war is conducted. Until the rebels are made to feel that rebellion is a crime which the Government will punish there is no hope of destroying it. I declare it as my deliberate conviction that it is better in this country, occupied by our troops, for a citizen to be a rebel than to be a Union man. Everything they have is protected with the most scrupulous care, especially their property in human flesh. Besides the general order of Gen. Halleck to prevent contrabands from coming inside our lines, every means is taken to show people that the Union army is just as ready as possible to keep 'the institution' secure. Not long ago my commanding officer (Gen. Wood) sent me an order to have my camp searched for a fugitive slave. I sent back word, that if Generals wish to disobey an express law of Congress, which is also an order from the War Department, they must do it themselves; for no soldier or officer under my command should take part in such a disobedience. We have marched scores of miles, past splendid plantations, waving with corn, which the planters boast openly is to feed the Southern army. . . . A few days since as an advanced brigade passed by a field with 40 of these human cattle at work, the whole gang came to the road, threw up their hats and shouted, 'Now we are free. We will go with you anywhere, we will work for you, do anything for you, fight for you, only let us go with you.' The Col. in command of the regiment thus addressed, drew his pistol and with terrible oaths said to the leading slave who spoke for the rest, 'Go back to your work, or I will put a bullet through your black heart.' This performance has been praised as 'a

very proper course to be taken under such circumstances.' . . . It seems to me hardly possible that God will let us succeed while such enormities are practiced."

Writing to his wife (June 23), he broke off his letter to say: "Just now I was surprised by a burst of music about ten feet to the rear of my tent. It is a little band of slave minstrels who have come up from the village to visit our colored people, and to serenade me. The rude music is really charming. I wish you could hear it, only you would be displeased at the 'Julinth' portion of the entertainment. Do you remember that feature of negro performances which you and I heard somewhere? Poor fellows! How can they sing songs? They told Green if the army would protect them, they would follow us to the end of the world. But they get no countenance from an American army. We seem to be as much their enemies as their masters."

An interesting episode of this march was described by Garfield some years later in the House of Representatives when speaking in support of a bill to permit recruits enlisted in the southern states to count as part of the quota of the state of the regiment enlisting them. "I wish to make a statement to the House," he said (February 26, 1864), "in regard to this bill. It refers to a matter of which I have practical knowledge. The only regiment of white men raised in any of the States mentioned in the resolution was raised mainly by officers under my command in the summer of 1862 and raised in three days. As my command was passing from Corinth, Mississippi, to Decatur, Alabama, I learned that in the range of the Sand Mountains to the south of us, the caves and fastnesses were filled with Union men who had stood out against the rebellion and the conscription agents and successfully defended themselves against every attack and attempt to force them into the rebel service. I sent Colonel Streight (now out of Libby prison, I hope) with his command, and in three days he raised nearly four hundred men. A woman who lived in those mountains came to us to ask that these men might enlist. Women brought in husbands, sons, and brothers. One woman brought in thirty-five men who immediately enlisted in the service."

At Mooresville, near Decatur, the brigade celebrated the Fourth of July, and Garfield, in spite of his inner depression and his physical sickness, played his part. The historian of the brigade says: "In the forenoon the Brigade held a 'mass meeting' in old-fashioned style. Gen. Garfield, who had few equals as an orator, delivered a stirring address which was received with great cheering."¹ The comment of the historian of the Fifty-first Indiana is equally enthusiastic. The address he calls "powerful, beautiful, stirring. His rich full voice, echoing the patriotic sentiments of his great heart was listened to with eagerness and responded to at the close with a yell that made the woods ring." As patron of athletics he "offered a prize of \$20 for the fleetest sprinter in the brigade."²

The next day Garfield described the occasion to his wife (July 5): "Yesterday we had a celebration of the 4th. I was hardly able to sit up but the officers of the Division insisted that I should speak and I went out and spoke about 20 or 30 minutes. I did not know but I had lost the trick of speech but I found the old feeling coming back to me with all its memories of other days. We had a very pleasant time though a strange one. . . . There is a church in the village of Mooresville near by and they have sent up inviting me to speak to them on Sunday. If I am not too unwell I have a notion to speak to them."

In this same letter Garfield for the first time took his wife into his confidence regarding his Congressional aspirations, since he was compelled to explain why, in spite of his poor physical condition and the lack of any compelling reason for remaining at the front, he did not ask for sick leave. It was part of his customary scrupulousness about the appearance of self-seeking. "A number of people have written me about running for Congress this fall. . . . I would rather, of course, be in Congress than in the army, if there is to be no more active service, for I have no taste for the dull monotony of Camp life, and then, I believe I can dispose of my life to more advantage than to confine it to the inglorious quiet of

¹ Hinman, *The Story of the Sherman Brigade*, p. 226.

² W. R. Hartpence, *History of the Fifty-first Indiana Infantry*, p. 57.

a Brigade camp. Still I am very unwilling to do anything that would look like a desire to leave my place in the army nor will I, as long as my health will hold out. To go home just now would, I fear, be misconstrued into a purpose to make political capital for myself. I have been so thoroughly dead militarily since I came to the Tennessee, that I hardly see how I can be sufficiently remembered to make my return a matter of much comment. Still, it might be, and I don't know why it is, but I have a more than usual horror at being hauled over the coals of political persecution again. What do you hear said about the Congressional matter?"

To add to his discomfort Garfield was placed on a court-martial, on June 15, over a lieutenant of the Fifty-eighth Indiana, and when that was over he was placed, July 5, on a more important one to try Colonel J. B. Turchin on charges which Garfield described to Rhodes. "I cannot sufficiently give utterance to my horror," he said (July 9), "of the ravages and outrages which have been committed by Gen. Mitchell's army. There has not been found in American history so black a page as that which will bear the record of Gen. Mitchell's campaign in Northern Alabama. He has fought no battle worthy the name and yet his overweening self-conceit has filled the columns of the press with his praises and procured him another star. I fear his reputation will not be enhanced by the incidental revelations of this trial. This town, which contains some of the finest village residences I have seen, was by Col. Turchin given up to pillage and in the presence of the Russian (Col. T.) was sacked according to the Muscovite custom."

But a few days later this opinion was modified, as shown in a letter to his wife (July 17): "This is the 13th day of the Court-Martial and we have only just closed the evidence for the prosecution. The case is a very important one but exceedingly tedious in its details. The horrible character of the outrages which have been committed here are in striking contrast with the character of the officer (Col. Turchin) who is charged with the responsibility of allowing their perpetration. From the accounts we had heard of him and his doings we had expected to meet as fierce and brutal a Mus-

covite as the dominions of the Czar could produce. But though he is a Russian by birth and education, yet when he came into court we met a fine manly figure, with broad expansive forehead, mild blue eye and an unusual depth of piercing intelligence which at once won respect. . . .

Though by a fiction of military law, the prosecution has been striving to fix upon him the robbery of citizens and rapes of female slaves, yet during all that time he has borne himself so much like a noble-souled man that he has quite won my heart. In conversation today with him I gathered his history. . . . He said to me 'Since I have been in the army I have tried to act for the best interests of this noble country. I have tried to teach rebels that treachery to the union was a terrible crime. My superior officers do not agree with my plans. They want the rebellion treated tenderly and gently. They may cashier me, but I shall appeal to the American people and implore them to wage this war in such a manner as will make humanity better for it.' I have tried to give you the substance of the thoughts of a man, who will probably be dishonorably dismissed from the army in a few days, but who, nevertheless has won my heart and whom I will always be glad to call a friend. My duties are exceedingly unpleasant. Col. Stanly, a brother Senator in 1860-61 and Capt. (Prof.) Edgerton of Cleveland are both to be tried before us."

His letters during these days of tedium and ill health show the depths of depression into which he was sinking over the military situation as he saw it. "The Grand Army of the West," he said to Rhodes (July 9 and 10), "is now spread out over a front of 300 miles from Memphis to Stevenson, and should the rebel army which occupies some point or points to the South of us, choose to strike a blow upon any part of our line, I do not see what is to hinder his breaking through our thin line before we could mass our forces and effectually resist him. There is positively no accounting for the wonders of scientific strategy!!! . . . I am anxious to hear what turn the Congressional matter will take. I can not get away from the Court Martial while I am able to sit up, for it is the most important one that has yet been called

in the west. But if the court closes up its work in reasonable time, I shall try to get home a little while, always provided there should be no battle imminent. . . . I have lately had a letter from Senator Smith, who was on a visit to Washington where he saw several leading Senators who said I must be put in command of a division. I have no notion in reference to the matter, whether such will be the result or not. I cannot accomplish much for the country or myself as I am now situated. Gen. Wood grows smaller and smaller in proportion as emergencies loom up."

A week later Garfield writing from Athens, Georgia (July 17), found hope reviving in regard to his health. "I am glad to tell you that I am considerably better, indeed I have got almost entirely well since my last letter. I am stopping at Dr. Mackie's, a wealthy planter, where I have a fine room and the best of accommodations. I take a shower bath every morning. Doesn't that astonish you! Tomorrow, during a recess of the court, I go out with him nine miles [to] visit his plantation and 95 slaves." But on military matters he could only report the fulfillment of his evil forebodings. "As I have long expected, the enemy has broken through our extended lines of communications. We have been cut off from Nashville several days and our whole army is on half rations. Again I repeat the sad truth that we have no generals. In this respect the South has far outstripped us. How long I shall be on this court I cannot tell. I fear a long time."

A week later Garfield incurred a sudden violent relapse in his chronic illness and under the double burden of depression over his own condition and mortification over the position of the army wrote bitterly to Rhodes as follows (July 24): "I tell you, Harry, it is far from pleasant to toss on a bed of pain, alone, in a hot sweltering room, hundreds of miles away from those who care especially for your life and comfort. But I am better now, though weak. With the exception of part of one day I have continued to preside over the deliberations of the Court though I have been allowed a cot to lie on, and have thus been enabled to work and be sick at the same time. . . . I am almost inclined to be delighted at the raids behind us, the cutting up of our R. roads and tele-

graphs behind us. It will do us good to have a few score towns in Ky., Ind. and Ohio plundered. It is particularly pertinent that these things should happen, especially such brilliant exploits as the giving up of Murfreesboro, while Gen. Mitchell is being persecuted and Col. Turchin is in his third week of trial for not dealing gently enough with rebels and their property. It may bring our people ultimately to understand the beauty of West Point, and the terribleness of a broken and ruined government. The regular army is as rotten as corruption can make it. You can hardly imagine how my lofty views of West Point have been lopped off one by one. There are few sprigs left on which I can hang fair confidence, much less admiration. Look at the shameful distribution of Halleck's army. I have written it in a dozen letters that our lines would be broken up and the rebels be behind us any day they chose to be. If we are not gobbled up in detail it will only be '*per gratiam hostium*.'

"I have lately received a letter from P. R. Spencer, did you see it? In it he proposes that Portage Co. should move in the Congressional nomination. I wrote him in answer as I have written before that I must leave the matter wholly to my friends. You tell me that you think my name may be committed to the tender mercies of a convention. I wish you would give me the grounds of your confidence. . . . Be assured I am not anxious in the matter and shall lose no sleep if O. P. B. [Brown] 'or any other' man, is chosen. . . . Wearily, wearily stretches the work of the court-martial. I think I would decline the honor of being Lord Chief Justice of the King's Bench."

The court-martial ended, as Garfield had foreseen with a decision against Colonel Turchin, but it was never executed, since, before it was rendered, he had been appointed a brigadier general. Garfield did not stay to the end, for his strength had become so gravely sapped by the persistent camp fever that he was compelled to accept a furlough and go back to Ohio to recuperate. On July 30 a special order was issued, relieving him, and the Twentieth Brigade was left to be commanded by Colonel Harker, of the Sixty-fourth Ohio, under whom it had opportunities to show its fighting

powers, such as were wholly lacking during Garfield's command. Thus ended the first period of Garfield's military service. Seldom has a more promising beginning come to a more disappointing conclusion. From the excitement and stimulus of independent campaigning at the outset, it had dropped steadily to dull routine, depression, sickness and disability, and when he left the army Garfield had nothing to show for his year of service beyond the rank of brigadier general, a damaged constitution and a profound distrust of the ability and real political loyalty of the officers under whom he had served.

It is not necessary here to discuss the justification of his state of mind. Military critics, studying the campaigns from April to August, are practically unanimous in the judgment that neither Halleck's advance nor Buell's was adequately studied out and that the latter in particular was faulty in plan and excessively deliberate in execution. Neither Buell nor Halleck was in truth a "fighting general." Manœuvres under such men were likely to be confined to taking successive positions, keeping the armies supplied and exhibiting a caution in the presence of the enemy which, against Beauregard, Bragg, or any other of the Confederate commanders, was equivalent to surrendering the initiative. Garfield's embittered judgment of them has been approved by history.

Garfield's journey homeward was slow and painful, but thanks to the devoted assistance of Captain Swaim, of his staff, he finally reached Hiram, August 6, emaciated and depressed. As he was stopping at Louisville, on his way, a visitor "said he had just heard that Col. Turchin had been dismissed the service and asked him if it were so. Garfield remarked. 'It may be so—the sentence was not published when I left, though it may be by this time.'" (Garfield to Buell, August 27.) This was seized upon as a "leak" from the court-martial and a Louisville paper promptly published an item announcing Turchin's dismissal, on Garfield's authority. This came to Turchin's knowledge and he promptly protested to General Buell, who wrote to Garfield asking for an explanation. As he lay sick he had the mortifi-

cation of being obliged to defend himself from the charge of giving out the secrets of a court-martial. Shortly after his arrival, he received a telegram from Stanton, directing him to relieve General Morgan at Cumberland Gap, but this opportunity for an independent command and a reunion with the beloved Forty-second he was too weak and sick to accept.

As was inevitable, the problem of the Congressional nomination instantly presented itself, and Garfield, sick as he was, found himself the focus of political talk. On August 12 a member of the Union committee wrote to him from Ravenna asking him squarely whether, if he were nominated, he would resign his command in the field. Garfield seized the occasion to make a clear statement of his position. "In answer I have to say that should my fellow-citizens choose me to represent them in the next Congress, I should still continue with my brigade in the field while I am needed there, unless the duties of the new Congress should sooner call me from it. . . . I take occasion to say that my proposed nomination is not of my own seeking and I should consent to accept it only on the ground of its being the spontaneous wish of my fellow-citizens." (August 15, 1862.)

But no such disclaimer could keep political visitors away, so on August 19 he fled with his wife to Howland Springs. He wrote to his mother (September 2): "I had hoped to visit you long before this and to have been back in the army by now. But I have improved very slowly and . . . I am still too weak to go back. . . . It was impossible for me to have any quiet or rest at Hiram or indeed any place where I was well acquainted. This has been a very pleasant quiet place though for a while the people from Warren came out here in such numbers that we were obliged to ask to be left more alone. The yellow has pretty nearly disappeared from my skin and I am feeling quite restored except in my strength—and in that I am gaining." "It was a quiet farmer's home, shut up in the woods on a hill and was just what I needed in the way of quiet and rest," he wrote to Hinsdale (September 12).

While he was there the convention met. He wrote to his

mother (September 2): "They are holding the nominating convention today at Garrettsville. I may be nominated but I don't know how it will turn out. I have done nothing about it and I really don't care much about it. If I am nominated I shall still go back to the army till the new Congress meets which will probably be a year from now, it may be more. I presume I am the only candidate who will not be at the convention. If the people of the District want me I take it that it is their business to tell me so and not mine to coax them to have me."

In more detail he wrote on the same day (September 2) to his former staff officer, Captain Plumb: "I cannot tell you how great a trial it is to me to be kept here. Every day seems twice its usual length while I am away from the field. . . . I think ten days will liberate me and then I shall come to you as fast as steam can carry me. . . . I am still staying at this quiet retreat to avoid the rush of visitors. There is a fine spring here and the house is simply a commodious farm house kept by a good-hearted cheerful farmer and we are at home. He has a bowling alley where I have lately gained strength to roll two or three games per day.

"I would far rather be in the field than in the Congress if the war is to continue past the time of assembling of the new Congress. Should I be elected, I shall stay in the field as long as the new Congress will let me and should we be so unfortunate as not to have broken the back of the rebellion by that time I should prefer to resign the seat and keep the saddle. . . . The Convention is meeting at Garrettsville now, while I am writing. I have not lifted a finger, nor made a move in my own behalf. . . . I don't know how the convention will act and I care but very little. Hutchins lost his own town after the most exciting caucus ever held there. He united all the friends of all the other candidates against me. There were 440 votes polled and I got 296 of them. As near as the returns from the primary meetings have been received from Trumbull Co. Hutchins got 16 delegates and I 24. Still I have no specially confident expectations of the result. There are so many candidates it makes it much a matter of doubt."

The report of the convention, published in the *Ashtabula Sentinel*, September 10, 1862, shows that there were five candidates who divided the delegates fairly equally, Garfield leading Hutchins on the first ballot by a single vote, 46 to 45, with D. Cadwell, R. W. Taylor and O. P. Brown following in order. For seven ballots it was a neck and neck contest between the two leaders, Hutchins managing to assume the lead on the fourth ballot; but one after another the weaker candidates withdrew, until on the eighth trial Garfield was successful by 78 to Hutchins's 71. The young brigadier had beaten the politician.

Important as this event was in Garfield's career, it was overshadowed at the time by the problem of his military service and the question of his return to health. A letter of September 9, to Hinsdale, shows his perturbed state of mind. "In regard to the Congressional nomination I hardly know whether to be sad or gratified. I am certainly gratified that I took no part in securing the nomination and did not even attend the convention though all the other candidates were there; but I feel in some degree sad at the prospect of being for a series of years brought out into public life when I would perhaps get more growth in the quiet of private study. Still I don't know but I grow faster in storm than calm, I suspect I do. The next four years in Congress will probably be as fatal to political longevity as the war is to personal life and health. The people will not attribute the burdens and serious troubles of the next few years so much to their philosophical causes as to their legislators and so I suspect Congress will be the scapegoat for the press and people, especially for demagogues. I would not, however, wish to be cowardly and shirk the responsibility of thinking and acting because the times are dangerous. So I shall try the rough sea if the bullets will let me."

A few days after writing this letter, Garfield felt strong enough to leave Ohio, September 16, and start for Washington, thereby bringing to an end this phase of his career. The disillusionment and depression which he underwent, during the five months since he joined the army under Buell, were simply his personal share of the great political reaction and

disappointment which swept the North in that period. What distinguished Garfield from many others whose hopes were crushed, was that he did not fall back into a mere critic and sulker, but turned strongly into a new line of activity, that of reëntering politics for the purpose of assailing slavery in that field.

CHAPTER VIII
WAITING FOR A COMMAND
1862-1863

GARFIELD reached Washington on September 18, with high hopes of being able to resume his service in the field. His ideas at this time were well set forth in the letter he wrote to Hinsdale shortly before leaving Hiram. "I have no idea," he wrote (September 12), "what post is to be assigned me, but Gov. Dennison thinks I am destined for a division on the Potomac. If under McClellan may the gods deliver me, if under Sigel I rejoice. . . . The war is now strangely mixed, and the days are sufficiently dark, but if we have any generalship (which we may reasonably doubt) we will take advantage of the nearness of the enemy to our border and strike them a worse blow than we could have done so far in on their own soil. . . . The most deplorable feature of the present situation is that our generals seem to have no confidence in each other, nor the people in them. Gov. Dennison writes me that the army at Washington is in a most fearful state of discouragement and demoralization. What has become of McClellan's boasted power of organization and disciplining of armies? Gen. Cox's Kanawha Brigade is said to be the finest corps in the whole Capitoline army—a fine comment on West Pointers and civilians!! . . . I think your theory of the difference between European and American warfare is correct. We can never hope for peace till we crush up or disperse their heavy armies and remove the active cause of the sectional feud. It may be a philosophical question whether 11,000,000 of people *can be subdued*, for we need no longer disguise the fact that this is the thing to be done before there can be union and peace."

It was with these rather grim opinions that Garfield turned his face eastward, little realizing that one of the most

interesting and at the same time one of the most trying experiences of his life lay before him. He was to have opportunities such as were granted to few young officers to see the inside of things military and civil at Washington and at the same time to undergo such trials of his patience and self-command as far surpassed in severity even the tedium and the irritation of the preceding summer.

At the outset everything seemed promising. Writing September 20 he reported the first impressions. "I reached here yesterday morning at 9:30 having spent the previous night at Baltimore. . . . I took dinner at 4:30 last evening with Sec. Chase at his house. His daughter Kate is quite a belle here, from what I learn. They have a fine residence and live in splendid style. Mr. Chase seems to be the only member of the Cabinet who stands firmly up with Stanton (or more properly Stanton stands up by him) for the vigorous prosecution of the war for freedom and the union's sake. Chase is, I believe, by far the strongest man in the administration and he seems to be thoroughly imbued with a moral and religious sense of the duties of the government in relation to the war. My interview with him and Stanton yesterday was satisfactory so far as they are concerned. They would give me any place in their power, but Stanton said it would be difficult to give me any place which would save me from West Point. . . . I have not yet come to any conclusion about where I would like to go. Of course I would like to go to Cumberland Gap, and Stanton wants me there, but says he cannot do it now without wronging Gen. Morgan. I did think about going to Port Royal but Gen. Hunter thinks the Government is bound to neglect that or any other place where negroes are to be treated like men."

A letter to Rhodes two days later gives additional details. "I think I have reached as peculiar a phase of my life as any I have yet met. I have come here in obedience to an order from the Secretary of War. He tells me to take a few days to reflect and as soon as I determine where I want to go, let him know and he will send me . . . wherever I wish, if it is in his power. At the same time he says he doubts if he shall be able to get me anywhere, where West Point will not put

its hands on me. . . . Since my visit with him I have been looking around. . . . I find that Gen. Sigel is under a quasi ban of West Point and a place among his Dutchmen would neither be personally desirable nor would it promise very much for the future. I went this morning to see Gen. Banks whom I consider one of our first generals. He was very kind and wanted me with him but is now in a temporary command and does not know what his own future is to be. In short it is quite impossible to see any way to usefulness or distinction that does not go down before West Point first. . . . My regret at losing the command of the Cumberland Gap forces in consequence of my sickness is very poignant indeed. The more I look the whole matter in the face, the more I am inclined to believe that it will be my fate to be put again under some West Pointer and command only a Brigade. It will not be so if Stanton can help it, but I doubt if he can prevail against the odds of the close corporation. . . . I am more disgusted at McClellan's late operation of lying still a day and two nights after the great battle and letting the rebels cross the river and get safely away before he began the pursuit or renewed the attack. It confirms my opinion of his utter want of audacity and vigor. There is great bitterness here in regard to him. If this nation dies it will be in consequence of the timidity of its rulers."

From this discouraging prospect Garfield turned with some hope toward a new plan which he thus outlined in a letter to Austin (September 25): "They are now talking of putting me in command of Florida. I shall know in a few days. If I go to Florida it will be to open the way for taking 20,000 northern men there to settle upon the confiscated lands of the rebels. In this way the Government proposes to make the seceded states loyal by giving them a loyal population." The plan in question was one brought forward by Eli Thayer, the organizer of the Emigrant Aid Society which had played an important part in the Kansas contest of a few years before, who imagined that the same methods might advantageously be applied to colonizing such a state as Florida. Chase's diary says: "Sept. 23 Stanton came in. . . . Said he proposed to make the department of Florida

with Thayer as Governor and Garfield as Commanding General, if I approved of Garfield. I said I approved heartily."¹ For some weeks this hope flitted before Garfield's vision, offering an opportunity to serve without coming under a West Pointer.

Almost simultaneously Chase, according to his journal, thought of an alternative method of employing the young officer. "It occurred to me that by having Garfield's and Mitchell's brigades brought from Louisville and sent to Port Royal, with one or two brigades in addition, a successful expedition against Charleston might be immediately organized; and I determined to speak to Stanton in relation to it tomorrow."²

For several weeks both these plans were under consideration, and Stanton, on his part, was prepared to offer Garfield something still different. "On the first day I came," he wrote to Rhodes (October 5), "Stanton offered me Western Virginia, but I resolved I would not choose but let them put me where they pleased." But apparently that was just what Stanton would not do. Garfield gradually became aware that Stanton was by no means all-powerful, but that military decisions were the outcome of the interplay of complicated forces involving the President, General Halleck, governors of states, members of the Cabinet, senators and congressmen. His letters show how, as he waited and planned and hoped, in the gossiping and fault-finding atmosphere of war-time Washington, the true difficulties of the situation dawned upon him.

The first thing that staggered him was the discovery of the low esteem in which Lincoln was held. He was himself scandalized by Lincoln's lack of personal authority. "He is almost a child," he wrote Rhodes, "in the hands of his generals. Indeed he recently told a delegation from Chicago that he could not grant a certain request of theirs, which he regarded perfectly proper to be granted, unless Gen. Halleck concurred. But he would give them a letter to the Gen.

¹ *Diary of S. P. Chase*, Amer. Hist. Assoc. Rep., 1903, Vol. I, p. 92.

² *Ibid.*, September 27, p. 97.

introducing them and their business. What shameful humiliation when the President becomes a petitioner before one of his subordinates!" (September 22.)

A few days later he was shown the seamy side of the army administration. "Chase sent for me yesterday," he wrote to Rhodes (September 26), "to ride out with him to see General Hooker who is considered one of our best generals. . . . He says McClellan never can be a soldier; has no dash, no boldness in him and is the curse of our army. It is a disgraceful thing that an Administration whose every member (Halleck too) has no confidence in a general yet have not enough spunk to turn him out. Chase said to me. 'If I had been the President I would have arrested McClellan for his failure to support Pope and ordered him tried and, if he had been convicted of what I believe him to be guilty of, I would have had him shot.'

"He then proceeded to give me an analysis of the War Department. Spreading out his fore and middle fingers so as to form a letter V he said, 'There (end of forefinger) is Stanton, full of propulsive energy, strong and sincere, but impatient of delay and restraint and feeling at times completely disheartened by the perplexities of his position. Hence fitful and lacks balanced steadiness. There (end of middle finger) is Halleck; with immense brain, clear, powerful intellect, full knowledge of his work, but cold as a stone, cares not one penny for the work, only as a professional performance; no more heart about it than the shoemaker who pegs away at a boot. Here (junction of knuckles of the fore and middle fingers) is the President with a great noble heart, most anxious to do his duty, but don't know how and has not the power and independence to shake off the shackles of West Point. If Lincoln's heart, Halleck's head and Stanton's executive energy could be united it would make a magnificent Sec. of War or President.' . . . Chatted half an hour today with Sec. Welles who looks very venerable and seems as imperturbable as a sleeping Rip Van Winkle. . . . Old General Wadsworth is here (lately nominated Gov. of N. Y.) He is a noble-looking old fellow. I like Hooker too, he has a fighting blue eye."

The day after this Garfield received a flattering invitation. "Sept. 27. Mr. Chase and his daughter Kate have insisted that I shall stay with them while I remain in Washington and so I came here this evening with all my luggage. I have a delightful room and am much better pleased than at the Willard." For a young man nothing could have been pleasanter, for Chase, besides being one of the foremost figures in the government, was a man of personal charm, and his house, under the sprightly leadership of his daughter, Kate Chase,—the belle of Washington,—was a center for war-time society. "Under almost any other circumstances," he wrote (October 12), "my stay here would be very pleasant. I see a large number of leading men almost every day. Last Thursday Mr. Chase had three lady relatives here from New York and Kate being too busy, I was requested to take them out to see the sights. We took the carriage and went across the Potomac to Arlington Heights, thence to Alexandria, thence to Fairfax Seminary back to Alexandria, drove the carriage on board a steamer and came back to Washington by water. . . . Mr. Chase is confined to the house by a sore foot (not the gout) and I have been keeping him company part of the day. Kate is unwell and was not down to breakfast. . . . She is a woman of good sense and pretty good culture—has a good form but not a pretty face, its beauty being marred by a nose slightly inclined to pug. She has probably more social influence and makes a better impression generally than any other cabinet lady. This is the transition period between the old slaveholding aristocratic social dynasty and the new Republican one. Indeed it is rather the absence of any, the interregnum. . . . The old social dynasty has been one of the most powerful political elements in Washington and is the secret of a great many successes for the South. From the days of Gen. Jackson and Mrs. Eaton it has been a great power."

On October 3 Garfield acted as Miss Chase's escort on a visit to the camp of General Schurz, an excursion which he described in detail and with the utmost gusto to Rhodes. Too long to quote in full, it is most interesting, perhaps, in its reflection of Garfield's unabated enthusiasm over things

German and its picture of the life at Schurz's and Sigel's headquarters. "Our people," he wrote (October 5), "hardly saw a German of any talent till the revolution of 1849 threw a crowd of noble fellows upon our shores. Nearly all these have the same type of form and physique. They are of a small well-knit frame; their heads and faces are inverted triangles of which the chin is the apex. This gives them great breadth of brain. The four generals I mention were Sigel, Schurz, Steinwehr, and Stahel. After supper we had most splendid music from Schurz and Sigel on the piano. They are both very fine performers, among the very best I ever heard. Several members of their staffs were there and sang their old Fatherland songs to the music. Mrs. Schurz's fine voice added, made music rarely equalled by our best artists. Schurz told me he could form a choir, from his 2000 men, of 150 artists, men who, at home even, were regarded as far above ordinary musicians. It is wholly impossible for me to describe the tremendous enthusiasm of these noble fellows. Full of genius, full of the fire of their own revolution and inspired anew by the spirit of American Liberty, and just now by the proclamation which gives Liberty a real meaning—they are really miracles of power. I am reminded of Körner and his *Wilde Jäger* in 1813. . . .

"After a long evening filled with singing and playing (smoking and wine interjected, (tell Almeda that the *wine* refers principally to the Germans except a little 'domestic Catawba' which refers to me) for both Sigel and Schurz smoked cigars in the midst of the most splendid playing,) we retired." The next day they visited the battlefield of Bull Run "and Gen. Schurz who was in the engagement gave us a fine description of the whole two days' work—and the shameful and unnecessary retreat which followed." Then followed a ghastly description of the devastation, the partly buried corpses, and the general wreckage which covered the whole region.

At Centerville Garfield encountered friends. "Just as we were leaving the field," he wrote, "a sunburned dragoon came up to me and reached out his hand, saying he was from Hiram and had sisters at school there this term. It was Har-

rington. . . . When we reached Centerville I went to the camp of the Regiment (6th Ohio V. Cav.) and found Northway, now a 1st Lieut. He spoke of cricket at Hiram. . . . Presently Shepherd of Newburgh, Capt. Bassett of Newton Falls and quite a crowd of friends came around. An Irishman came pushing in and gave me his hard hand saying 'Jineral, I've heard ye prache mony a time.' Then came Fenton—you remember him—good at cricket—from Bloomfield. His fine muscles are all iron now and his face bronze but his heart and his eyes were full of a noble tenderness. . . . I tell you it is a joy to fight beside such fellows. Fenton talked with me and I could see in his eyes the old bashfulness of the student before his teacher, the soldier before his officer, strangely mingled with the warmth of the friend, and I loved the dear fellow more than ever."

Chase's diary shows that on September 25, when returning from the visit to Hooker, Garfield strongly impressed him by narrating the history of his rise from "a laborer on a canal" to a "conspicuous part as a Republican leader." Two days later in his zeal to help "this fine officer," Chase records trying vainly to turn aside some New York regiments destined for McClellan's army in order to provide Garfield with a force to move at once against Charleston. On September 30 and October 6 he notes anecdotes told by Garfield at his table to show the proslavery attitude of regular army men.

But to Garfield this opportunity for seeing the leading public men and for occasional social amusement was of scarcely more than passing interest. His heart was set on getting a chance to hit slavery, or to serve somewhere in the war, either independently or under some general in whom he had confidence. His mood was somber and grim and the conversation he heard daily at Chase's table was such as to increase his depression. Undoubtedly his opinion of Lincoln as that of a good-hearted but weak man was directly due to Chase's influence. He commented on the issue of the Emancipation Proclamation in words evidently derived from Chase. "All the men who are worth talking to," he said to Rhodes (September 26), "are in favor of it, now that it has been

promulgated. Mr. Lincoln did it himself and when he called the cabinet together to read it, told them he did not ask their opinion about publishing it, only he would be glad of any suggestions in reference to its language, and special points. Only two members (Chase and Stanton) were really in favor of it." A few days later he wrote to his wife (September 27): "The President's proclamation gives great satisfaction among all strong vigorous men. It can only have an adverse effect in Ky. and Tenn. and that, whatever it may be, is a thousand times overbalanced by the great moral force and significance which the measure will add to the war. The President's heart is right. God grant he may have the strength to stand up to his convictions and carry them out to the full."

But such encouragement as the Proclamation afforded was soon swallowed up in his deepening distress over the general military stagnation. "It is two weeks this morning since I arrived here," he wrote his wife (October 3), "and it has dragged very heavily, I assure you. But the personal discomfort of being kept here, and the positive loss of reputation I shall suffer if I do not do something soon, are all overborne by my painful and anxious interest in the welfare of the country. Men do not usually grieve for national calamities as for smaller specific sorrows. But when I see what is unfolding here every day, of the weak, timid government on the one hand and the deep plottings of the old Breckenridge wing of the Democratic Party in connection with Gen. McClellan; when I see the criminal vacillation that has marked the course of the Government in its desire to remove him from command and its cowardly drawing back at the very important moment when hesitation is surrender—I am filled with most anxious forebodings. Only think of it. Gen. McClellan lay still on the field of Antietam one day and two nights and let the rebels cross the Potomac in perfect safety when he could have destroyed them. He has been reinforced until he must have near 140,000 men. He now refuses to cross the Potomac into Va. till the river is permanently swelled by rains so that the rebels can't get around behind him into Maryland, at which time, of course, the

roads will be bad and the winter near. To complete the disgracefulness of this sad picture he has sent to Washington for an immense supply of intrenching tools and for all the Topographical engineers that can be spared from the various departments of the government.

"You have probably seen the account of the dismissal of Maj. Key from the army by the President. He was a brother of Key, our Ohio Senator and on Halleck's staff. His crime was that on being asked why McClellan did not follow the rebels after Antietam he answered: 'It is not the plan to whip the rebels. They are to be kept from invading the North and the two armies are to be kept in the field till both sections of the country are exhausted, and the armies and the Democracy will compromise the matter!' From all I can see I am almost convinced that McClellan is not misrepresented in that statement. . . . Four days ago Buell was suspended from command, the papers all made out, but Crittenden and a few more half-and-half patriots from Ky. protested and the Government backed down at once and restored him."

In a letter to Hinsdale of the same period we see additional reflections of the opinions of Chase and his visitors (October 13). "Your views are right concerning Sec. Seward. He has always, in the Senate, made a fine oration in favor of or against any great measure and then taken his ease, enjoyed his 'otium cum dignitate' till the time for voting came when he has voted right, but all the while was in good social standing with both friends and enemies. He never, like Douglas, went into a contest to contest every inch of ground against whatever odds. He was legislative rather than parliamentary or executive, and in the cabinet he takes the same course—says his say and then lets it go. In these times the cabinet as well as the field need real muscular workers as well as thinkers."

He wrote to Rhodes (October 5): "The President returned from visiting McClellan last night. God grant that he has come to the conclusion to remove him. . . . I think we are passing through a most fearful time and the most fearful aspect by far is the painful weakness and uncertainty of the

Administration. I have no words to tell you how sad my heart is over it all. With an army of the noblest men that ever took up arms and yet nothing being done because of the jealousy and selfishness of a few men. There is that glorious Sigel—stripped down to 7000 men and placed under an inferior both in rank and ability. His men have been sent away to swell McClellan's already overgrown army and McClellan refuses to cross the river and has sent for intrenching tools, while Sigel could, if he had the force, strike a fatal blow upon the rebels' rear and flank. When he (Sigel) spoke to Halleck about it a few days ago he was personally insulted by him and Halleck has also charged him with cowardice. . . . If the Republic goes down in blood and ruin, let its obituary be written thus: 'Died of West Point.' Unless help comes soon, that ignominious death will stare us in the face. For myself I say in all sincerity I have no wish to survive this Republic and if the end must come I hope I may find a bed like Kearney's. I am passing through a terrible ordeal of personal suffering over the whole matter. . . . Stanton, Chase and Morton talk this evening like men whose hearts are sinking down in despairing shame at a condition which might be so easily remedied if only they were allowed to use bold vigorous measures. To what a depth of disgraceful weakness are we reduced!"

Meanwhile his friend of the Ohio Senate, J. D. Cox, was forging steadily ahead. "Last night Gen. Cox and staff arrived," Garfield told his wife (October 7), "and I was with him till a late hour. He has been made a Major-General and is ordered to Western Virginia. . . . I rejoice at his good fortune which has justly come to him after so long a time. He did finely at the battles of South Mountain and Antietam. . . . I did what I could for his promotion. It is a step toward the vindication of merit vs. West Point."

The next day he closed a letter by saying (October 8): "My heart burns with indignation when I see these beautiful autumn days pass and McClellan's army idle. In a few weeks more the rains will be upon us and this campaign will be ended. The rebels are unmolestedly moving back toward Richmond. Shame! If not treason." A few days later he

wrote to his friend Plumb, of the Forty-second, a letter which never reached him, since it was captured by rebel guerrillas. It was, however, published in the *Tennessee Vidette*, November 11, to show the Southern people the depression at the North. Part of it ran: "It seems criminal for any one to be still when there is so much to be done. . . . Yet I am constantly told that a command is just to be placed in my hands. Indeed two days ago Secretary Stanton told Mr. Chase the Twentieth Brigade should be sent to me. That is now the programme, but I have no right to expect it will be the programme two days hence. I appreciate and feel all you say about Generals Halleck, McClellan, and Buell. If the president only had the nerve, there would be a rattling among the dry bones very soon. My heart cries out, How long, Oh Lord, How long!"

He wrote to Austin (October 14): "We have lain still so long with our great armies that we have almost lost the great opportunities which the good weather and the good roads have afforded us. On the whole, therefore, I don't know but I am better pleased to go to Florida, or some point far to the South where something can be done even in the winter season. I go to New York tomorrow with Mr. Thayer of Massachusetts to see some leading men of the city in reference to the matter. I shall be gone about a week and then return here. If I go to Florida I shall have command of that Department and be responsible to no other commander and make my reports and receive my instructions from the Secretary of War. It will be much better and pleasanter for me to be independent of West Point and all its surroundings. . . . I shall be pleased to help in the experiment in Florida. I know I run the risk of making a failure which would be very bad, but war is made up of risks and I have made up my mind to do without complaint whatever is put upon me. I know the President and his cabinet have confidence in me and I hope I may continue to prove worthy of it."

The journey to New York gave Garfield a chance to see some interesting men but produced no real results. "I had a conference with Thayer," he wrote his wife (October 24),

“just before leaving New York, and found that the Florida plan is winning friends and supporters every day. The only thing now needed is the action of the government, and we seem as far from that as ever. I have not learned what the War Dept. has been doing in my absence, but from all I can gather they have done nothing. It is exceedingly discouraging to see how weak and dilatory they are. . . . In New York, here, everywhere there is a settled gloom on nearly every face. A great nation is groaning in an agony of suspense and anxiety to have something done. A people that have poured out with a most lavish hand, their life and treasure to save their government, a people that have trusted their executive head with a constancy and faith which in these degenerate days is really sublime—are now beginning to feel that their confidence has been betrayed, their treasure squandered and the lives of their children sacrificed in unavailing slaughter.”

To Rhodes he added (October 26): “I saw Greeley, Beecher, and a number of the leading lights in N. Y. All grant that the prospect looks very dark and that there is little hope while Halleck, McClellan, and Buell are in command. It is becoming a settled feeling that there is some concert of purpose between the leading generals to prevent the contest from being decisive. Maj. Key’s ‘programme’ is becoming more and more manifest every day. Yesterday Mr. Chase had an interview with the President and Sec. of War and thinks they are now pretty fully aroused. The removal of Buell evidently interfered with the programme and I hope will pave the way for the removal of the other two. I am thoroughly ashamed to be seen on the streets in uniform and I am seriously thinking of resigning my commission and coming out in a letter giving my reasons why. Still, my work is always to be assigned ‘very soon’ and I, like every other general of positive opinions, am kept in idleness. I shall wait a few days more.”

The few days extended to weeks and still matters remained undecided. It seemed impossible to get Halleck’s approval. Meanwhile Garfield had formed a peculiar friendship with

one of the very West Pointers whom at the time he distrusted. This was Major General Irvin McDowell, now without a command and in a wholly unmerited disgrace and unpopularity since the second battle of Bull Run. Garfield mentions calling on him October 3 and again on October 6 and 10, and seems to have succeeded in stirring the unfortunate general to the recital of all his wrongs which—inflited as he believed them to be by McClellan and Lincoln—served to add fuel to Garfield's animosity toward General and President.

"Yesterday I spent the early part of the day with Gen. McDowell," he wrote (October 7). "He has been in a position to know as fully and comprehensively the operations of the army in the East and the conduct of the War Department and the leading generals of the Potomac as any man in the country, and while he has invited me to look over his papers, so that an Ohio man may understand his case, and is grateful to me for doing so, I am glad of such an opportunity to learn from such a competent and reliable source, the inner movements of the sadly famous series of campaigns. . . . I shall have two or three more sittings with him and go over his Shenandoah campaign which will illustrate his relations to McClellan and to the Administration."

On October 12 he sent to his wife, under injunctions of strict secrecy, twenty-four pages of manuscript, giving in full detail his recollections of McDowell's revelations coupled with his own comments on McDowell and on all the generals mentioned. Seventeen of the pages are devoted to a narrative of McDowell's services and it may be said that they embody the facts and interpretations now commonly accepted. Then come sketches of the generals, of which the most interesting is that of McDowell himself, which may well be inserted, since he remained after these interviews a lifelong friend. "McDowell is a man of far more than ordinary ability and culture. He is frank, open, manly, severe, and sincere. . . . He does not deem it discreditable to be a mere soldier. His military education has led him to obey without question his military superiors and to make no explanations of his orders



or movements to those under him. He says he is a living illustration of the truth that no man's reputation is safe who *merely* goes forward and does his whole duty. I add to this statement the reflection that his military education has brought him to feel a kind of lofty contempt for the press and politics and civil life generally, which has kept him stiff and reticent where he ought to have spoken. . . . Whether he has the dash and audacity to make a good general I do not know. That he is a true, brave man I have no doubt. I *like Gen. Irvin McDowell.*" So promptly did the prejudice against "West Point" vanish when Garfield came to know and respect one who was certainly, as described, a typical product! The influence of McDowell tended to do away with Garfield's excessive enthusiasm for Sigel, but strengthened materially his distrust of McClellan, of whom he wrote: "I consider him one of the weakest and most timid generals that ever led an army. This opinion is held by Gen. Hooker and nearly every one of his Field Marshalls. I think the government would at once remove him, but for the fear that it would strengthen the Democratic party too much in the coming elections, especially in New York. Unless some new complications arise, I think he will be removed as soon as the N. Y. election is over."

The fear about the elections was well grounded. It was during these months that Northern sentiment, shaken by the military failures, broke away from its united support of the administration, and split into violently opposing factions. On the one hand, most Democrats and many former "old-line" Whigs revolted against the Emancipation Proclamation of September 21, the culmination of a number of steps against slavery, and began openly to denounce the war as no longer for the Union but for abolition. Arraigning the administration for overriding the constitution, these elements organized a powerful political campaign and contested Congressional and state elections with a vigor and success that appalled all lovers of the Union. On the other hand, a strong element among the Republicans, led by the old-time Freesoilers and Anti-Nebraska men in Congress and by

Chase in the Cabinet, felt that the war could never succeed unless whole-hearted antislavery men were put in places of authority and the whole war administration reorganized on a basis of more energetic personalities. Both to them and to their conservative opponents the one person responsible for the country's situation was Lincoln whose weak good nature, hesitation and lack of any personal energy were ruining the cause he professed to maintain. Above all, his permitting McClellan to remain at the head of the Army of the Potomac was a sign of a fatal incapacity.

When the October elections occurred it became evident that a dangerous reaction was under way against the Republican administration. Garfield wrote to Hinsdale (October 30): "I had hoped by this time to write you more hopefully and cheerfully than I did before, but the gloom is no less sombre and there are no more hopeful signs unless, indeed, the condensing blackness indicates the bursting of a terrible storm, which, though it destroy much, may clear the sky of its suffocating vapors. . . . I doubt if anything short of the overwhelming indignation of the people can do us any substantial good. The elections in Ohio, Penn., and Indiana are the natural results of the weakness of the administration. Of course the absence of voters who are in the army contributes to the result, but if we had had a vigorous campaign and a bold strong President this disgraceful defeat could not have happened."

On October 19 he wrote home: "I am feeling exceedingly blue over the late elections in Ohio and Indiana. At that rate we shall be overpowered by treason at home. Do you know what my majority was? I have not seen any account of it." His wife sent him the information he asked for. "Thank you for the election returns," he commented (October 31); "I believe my dear friends in Hiram managed to run me behind the ticket in that place a little. I hope they enjoy the sport." Garfield's majority was very large, as was to be expected in one of the strongest antislavery districts in the United States. The figures in the *Tribune Almanac* for 1863 stand as follows:

	Garfield	Wood
Ashtabula	3,358	764
Geauga	1,941	371
Mahoning	2,187	2,075
Portage	2,420	1,753
Trumbull	3,382	1,900
	13,288	6,763

The overwhelmingly Republican character of the three northernmost counties, Ashtabula, Geauga and Trumbull, where, even in this year of reaction, the party cast from 64 to 80 per cent of the total vote, is marked, as well as the existence of a much more considerable Democratic element in Mahoning and Portage. So long as political conditions remained unchanged it was clear that a Republican nomination was equivalent to an election in this district.

The November elections plunged Garfield still deeper into gloom, although he tried to get a grim satisfaction out of their very ominousness. "The news this morning from the elections," he wrote home (November 5), "is most disheartening. New York seems to have gone secession and several other states also. There will be a jubilee in Richmond, the like of which has not been seen since the first battle of Bull Run. The rankest secessionists of New York city have been elected to Congress and the complexion of that body is now involved in great doubt. It would not have been so great a calamity if the Army of the Potomac had been driven in, bloody and broken, to the defences of Washington. . . . I have this morning a kind of feeling of desperation which would make me welcome fever within and rebels without if I might see some light break in upon our poor bleeding and outraged country. . . . I feel what you say about the effect on my reputation to lie here so long—but my resignation would do no good. If I supposed this curse of idleness were intended as a slight to me I would, of course, resign at once. But when I see it is the same thing with every Republican General in the army, I think it is our duty to bear a little longer and see if the President won't conclude

that having failed to buy up his enemies by kindness, he had better not drive away all his friends by neglect." Repeating the same idea to Rhodes, he went on (November 10): "If the disastrous elections shall act as a spur to the President to give him some motion, I shall welcome them as messengers of mercy though they come in the guise of terrible disasters."

Not until the removal of McClellan did a ray of light pierce the blackness. Fortunately for Garfield this cheering news arrived just at the moment when he most needed encouragement. On November 7 he had written a joyful letter to his wife, saying: "I am glad to tell you that I am at last assigned to duty. I go with Maj. Gen. Hunter to Port Royal, as the second in command to operate against Charleston and I hope to take Fort Sumpter. If I may be an assistant in that work it will compensate for all this vexatious and weary delay which has kept me in inglorious idleness so long. I beg you not to feel alarmed in consequence of yellow fever of which Gen. Mitchell so sadly died, for it has never been known to continue with any virulence after the frosts set in which usually come on by the middle of November. There will be many advantages of that climate during the winter season and I hope to be able to give you tropical pictures which will compensate for my being so far away."

But the cup was almost immediately dashed away from his lips, as the accompanying letter to Rhodes shows. "Nov. 10. I am today in a singularly mixed state of joy and disappointment. . . . Day before yesterday I was ordered to go with Gen. Hunter to Hilton Head. Eleven thousand men were ordered to go with us. I was to be second in command and to have at least a division. We, Gen. H and I, held a long and most cordial interview and laid plans for making a speedy and thundering attack on Charleston and Sumter and for 24 hours I felt more joyful than I have at any time since I left the Sandy Valley. I telegraphed for my staff to meet me in Baltimore where we were to take the steamer tomorrow, and in three days from now we should have been in the enemy's country. But yesterday a dispatch came that the yellow fever was raging with great malignity and that no more

troops should be sent there till the black frosts set in. So the order was suspended and troops turned into another channel. . . . So much for bad news. Before this reaches you you will have read of the removal of McClellan. God be praised that this act of justice to the army and the country, so long delayed, has been consummated at last. It is better to the country than a decisive victory over the enemy. . . . On the whole I see a brighter prospect ahead for the country than I have at any time since I came to Washington. The day is dawning. I cannot leave the army now."

Writing to his wife the next day (November 11) he showed himself still hopeful in spite of the setback. "I was greatly disappointed," he said: "I think, however, we shall not be very long delayed. The cold weather and snow we have had during the past week, has I hope, frozen the fever out, so that it will soon be safe. My staff has not yet arrived, but will be here tonight. On the whole I am very much pleased with the proposed expedition and the place I was, and probably still am to have in it. It will give the Government a great moral power to have retaken Charleston and Sumter and I shall be glad to bear a part in that work."

But this hope gradually faded, and the Charleston expedition became simply one more in the long list of abortive plans and abandoned schemes, characteristic of that stage of the war. The sole result for Garfield was to bring about his removal from the Chase household. "Since I wrote you last," he told his wife (November 16), "I have left Mr. Chase's and taken rooms and board at 119 Pennsylvania Avenue, so as to be with my staff, and keep them company in the strange city. It was very pleasant indeed to be at Mr. Chase's, and though I had the fullest assurance that my stay was a pleasure to them yet I could not but feel that I was staying a long time as a guest by invitation, and so seized the arrival of my staff as an occasion to get away. . . . But I think they really regretted my coming away. Mr. Chase and I are about equal at chess and we had been averaging five or six games a day for the last two or three weeks, and when I called on him night before last he insisted on playing though quite a large company was present, and we kept at it

till eleven o'clock. . . . There are as yet no indications as to the date of our departure for the South. The last advices from Port Royal show the health of the troops improving and lead us to hope we may not be detained here long."

Garfield took away with him from his residence with Chase not only a lively sense of gratitude to one whom he regarded as the leading American statesman, but an interest in a wholly new subject which was destined later to become his chief field of public activity and political leadership. In a letter written after Chase's death he said, "During several weeks I was permitted to share his morning and evening studies on financial questions."¹ It is interesting to trace in Garfield's contemporary letters the birth of this new and fascinating interest. "I have taken up the subject of currency and finance," he wrote to Rhodes (November 2), "and have been reading the great debates of Webster, Calhoun and Benton and comparing them with Macauley's fifth volume. At any other time than this, such a pursuit would delight my soul and even now I occasionally forget that our nation is struggling for its life and so take pleasure in these studies. I think, if we ever survive the shock of this war, the great currency question will be revived with new and interesting features resulting from our huge National Debt which now amounts to seven hundred millions and will be nearly doubled before the war closes."

On December 2, when Chase's annual report came out, Garfield wrote a letter to Rhodes showing how far his active mind had already carried him in this wholly new field. "Chase's report is the great state paper of the day; in some respects the greatest ever brought out in that department. There is one matter in it about which I feel a personal gratification. We conversed a good deal on currency while I was at his house and I read a good deal on the subject. Mr. Carey of Phila. was sent for to be conversed with upon it. In one conversation I advanced the following in about the words in which they are written—"There are two causes and only two which can affect a paper currency, and cause it to fluctuate in value. 1st the kind of security on which it is

¹ J. W. Schuckers, *Life of S. P. Chase*, p. 626.

based and 2nd the amount of its circulation. To secure a uniform currency both these conditions must be provided by *one* power. Congress has the power, by the Constitution to coin money and regulate currency but it has most unwisely allowed states and corporations and even individuals to make currency. Thus we have a thousand different parties tinkering at the currency. Hence there is no uniformity in the securities on which the various currencies are based and of course there can be no rational regulation of the amount of issue. . . . Therefore to remedy the evil Congress must assume the exclusive control of the matter and sweep away all currency but its own.' It was considered a very novel proposition but there is a great deal of it in the Sec's report." Before the end of the year Garfield was preparing an article on the currency. "I am surprised," he confided to Rhodes, "that in so short a time I should be able to attract the attention of some men with whom I have conversed. I spent some time with Amasa Walker of Boston and Judge Davies of N. Y. a few evenings ago on the subject."

Meanwhile, immediately after his disappointment regarding the South Carolina plan, Garfield found himself, to his surprise and regret, placed on a court-martial of the gravest importance, the famous case of Fitz-John Porter. The first step toward drawing him into the half-military, half-political controversies in which Congress, the press and both parties, as well as different army factions, were involved, came when Garfield was appointed on a board to investigate the military conduct of General McDowell. As he had already warmly espoused McDowell's cause and sent home thousands of words taken down from his interviews, he was dismayed and wrote to his wife: "You remember that I had a long interview with McD. and the manuscript I sent you was drawn chiefly from my recollection of his official documents. Now being placed on the court to try the very case, it is exceedingly important that nobody shall make any use of that document I sent home, lest I be again charged with breaking the faith of a court-martial. I had at the time, not the remotest idea that I should ever have any official connection with the case. What have you done with the manu-

script? . . . I want it preserved, but locked out of sight for the present." (October 31.)

This commission of inquiry did not meet, however, and Garfield probably regarded his appointment to a command under Hunter as quashing that assignment. But on November 17 the War Department issued two new orders, one reconstituting the McDowell court of inquiry and the other creating a similar court to investigate charges against General Fitz-John Porter. On this latter were placed both Generals Hunter and Garfield, indicating that in the opinion of the War Department the South Carolina plan was practically shelved. At first Garfield was hopeful that it might prove a short episode. "On the whole," he wrote his wife (November 21), "I have been sadder for four days than for a long time. This has been heightened by being placed on another court (Maj. Gen. Fitz John Porter) which will probably keep us here a week or two. But I am not given to blues and you need take no trouble about it in the least. Let me once be at the head of a column with Harry between my legs and I can bid a gay farewell to blue devils and almost all other colored friends. . . . I am now writing [in] the court room before the members of the Court,—rather the Military Commission—have arrived. Gen. Hunter and I have been changed from the McDowell court to this, because this can do its work in a shorter time than the other. I hope and believe, by the time this is through with its work, the fever may be fully abated and the iron-clad gunboats ready to go with us. I am better pleased to go against Charleston, especially as it is to be in winter, than to any other place in the army."

But four days after Garfield wrote, the commission of inquiry was reconstituted as a general court-martial for the purpose of actually trying the accused general on serious charges. To anyone looking at the situation from the standpoint of later years, it is clear that Garfield could not possibly have regarded himself as an unprejudiced judge. The extracts from his letters of the summer and autumn of 1862 have abundantly shown his constantly rising dislike for "West Point" and the extent to which he identified McClel-

lan with everything that was dangerous if not positively disloyal among the professional soldiers. Now the Fitz-John Porter case was one involving these very suspicions, for while McClellan himself was not brought in, Porter, who was one of McClellan's staunch friends, was charged with having shown toward Pope during the operations of the Second Battle of Bull Run precisely the same disloyalty that was laid to McClellan. It was not a purely military court-martial, but to a great extent a political trial, and the whole history of the case shows that it was so considered in the eyes of the public. McClellan had been removed. Now the task was to crush what remained of his dangerous and corrupting influence by striking at a conspicuous offender. Such was the matter as it appeared to the political world, and most of all to those men, such as Chase, who were Garfield's personal friends. Garfield has not left any positive statement on his attitude in his writings, but it is easy to draw the inference from nearly all his references to the case that he considered himself to be doing a political as well as a military duty and that his suspicions of McClellan and "West Point" were a positive qualification instead of the reverse.

The court-martial was prolonged and the testimony voluminous. From November 27 until January 10 it was in session nearly every secular day and many of Garfield's letters were written from the courtroom itself. From the official record it is not possible to discover Garfield's personal part. Doubtless he asked questions, but, following military etiquette, all questions asked by any of the Generals were recorded as asked by "the Court." In his letters Garfield was careful not to give information which would be in the nature of a "leak," but his remarks indicate pretty clearly in what direction his sympathies lay. Some of his comments on the members of the court and the lawyers concerned are worth quoting as an illustration of Garfield's skill in characterization.

Writing to Rhodes (December 5), he says: "While there is a technical question before the court to which I need give no particular attention I will make a few notes on persons and things for you. This court is attracting a great deal of

interest and the room during the hours of open court is crowded with officers of high rank and citizens of high standing. This interest results from the high rank and command of the accused, the leading witnesses,—(to include Gens. Pope and McClellan)—and the number and rank of officers composing it, and more than all the gravity of the charges and the important operations which the transactions under consideration cover. The doings of the court will no doubt form an important part of the future history of the war. By the custom of military courts, members are seated at the table in the order of their rank. At the head of the table sits Gen. Hunter who by virtue of rank is President. He is a man of about sixty years of age, wears no other whiskers than a moustache, which together with his somewhat thin hair is dyed black. He has keen grey eyes, a long nose, slightly aquiline, a large mouth with corners slightly depressed and the whole shut with a sharp decisiveness. He has a habit of swaying his head from side to side when he speaks and seems to sling his quick decisive words right and left."

On December 14, while the Fredericksburg campaign was at its height, he wrote to Rhodes: "Today the battle is raging along the Rappahannock. . . . Our court is becoming intensely interesting in its developments and at almost any other time I should be glad of such an opportunity as this affords to become acquainted with the men and movements of the time. But I am growing more and more restless every day, and when the work of the court is done I shall make a direct issue with the War Dept. They must give me something to do or they must take my commission. I will not endure it. Gen. McDowell was before us Friday and Saturday. . . . I admire McDowell more and more. His saxon is as clear as crystal and no amount of cross-examination can render him opaque or confused in the least degree. On the whole I have a higher opinion of McDowell's talents than of any other man's in the army and if he is again assigned a command I would prefer to go under him rather than any other.

"Reverdy Johnson is the prince of lawyers in this coun-

try. He and Joe Holt form a fine group for studying character. Johnson is more of an intellectual *bear* than any man I ever saw. He has a huge face with powerful maxillary muscles which give him a perfect mastiff look; eyes that protrude from his head,—one of them blind;—a heavy rugged nose, the longest upper lip I ever saw, face closely shaven, coarse bristly hair nearly white and a heavy, surly clangorous voice that pierces and tears at the same time. There is a direct searching fierceness in his questions, which is of itself enough almost to make a witness suspect himself to be a villain and fear that he is lying. He will make a modest conscientious man give his testimony with so much timidity and so many modifications that the force of it is half wasted by the time it reaches the record. Holt is genial, pleasant; wears his greatness with a dignity and grace which makes everybody love him, but is fully master of the situation and is never for a moment caught off his guard. McDowell's testimony was very direct and crushing and whenever Johnson attempted to work a growl of discord into it, he struck a rock which flashed out fire and light upon the investigation."

In one case—the only one preserved in his letters—he reports himself as throwing his influence strongly in such a way as to permit McDowell to state an opinion which was damaging to Porter. "A few days ago," he wrote to Rhodes (December 14), "the court had got muddled up on the question of how far a witness should be allowed to give his opinion. Johnson had objected to a question which Holt had asked McDowell on the ground that his opinion was asked. I got off something like the following as an answer to Reverdy. 'It is true that the opinion of a witness is inadmissible when that opinion is based on written orders or other documents in possession of the court, or on any facts which may be fully placed before the court. In all such cases it is the business of the witnesses to furnish those documents and facts and it is the duty of the Court to interpret the one and draw its own conclusions from the other. But when the opinion of the witness is a collective judgment, based on a series of complex facts and collateral circumstances, which cannot in their totality be placed perfectly before the court,

such opinion is not only admissible but is the Court's only mode of reaching the truth. The question objected to is that Gen. McDowell's opinion is asked how, if Gen. Porter had attacked the right flank of the enemy on the 29th Aug., as he was ordered, would it have affected the result of the battle. It is important for this Court to know the situation of the movement as the witness knew it. Hence it is competent for the court to propound the question.' Johnson's objection was overruled and Gen. Hitchcock asked that my exposition be entered on the record as the rule of the Court in such cases." The record of the case then shows that this recollection was slightly in error, for the use of the ruling was not to permit McDowell to utter his opinion—that he had done without objection—but to prevent him from being obliged to answer a hypothetical question raised by Johnson.¹ Garfield's words are given, substantially as he reported them, as uttered by "a member of the court." (December 13.)

Condemned thus to remain in Washington for week after week and with his hope of going to South Carolina practically gone, he fell once more into a despondency against which he struggled, but which constantly revealed itself in his letters. It is an odd commentary on the limited scope of the patronage of Chase and the ostensible friendship of Stanton that, while their favor could not secure for Garfield any command, they seemed able to get him increased rank. "From what has been said to me," he remarked to Rhodes (November 16), "I believe I could be made Maj. Gen. now, if I should ask it, but I would not, until I should have done something more. Do you remember that I have had no opportunity to do anything since I left the Sandy Valley? War is something like hunting; you may kill a buck the first hour, and you may hunt a week and never see a track."

To Hinsdale (December 1): "I have been to the capitol today and heard the President's Message, read by Forney. I could hardly credit my ears when I listened to the whole message, and heard no word or sentence that indicated that the Administration intended to push the war to a triumphant conclusion. . . . This omission is significant and ominous.

¹ *Official Records*, Vol. XII, pt. 2, sup., p. 916.

. . . The President goes into what seems to me a most weak and absurd scheme of emancipation in the year of our Lord, 1900, and goes on to say that this scheme will end the rebellion sooner than it can be ended by force, and much cheaper. I have lately seen some statements in the public journals which lead me to believe there is in contemplation a scheme for effecting some sort of adjustment with the rebels. Now all that I have to say is that any scheme which does not include the purpose of pulverizing the rebel armies and completely subduing them will bring upon us the most fearful future that any nation has seen. I hope with my whole heart that these fears may be groundless, but I have been made inexpressibly sad by the message."

A week later he mentioned to his wife some of the gossip about himself which illustrated the inveterately political atmosphere connected with army appointments. "By the way—and not to be named out of our circle—there are several leading men who are so sharp-sighted as to see very deep into political mill-stones—and who say that there is a secret determination to keep me out of the field till the Ohio legislature has elected a U. S. Senator—for should I gain any considerable credit in the field, it might be a disturbing element in the plans and plots relative to that event. I, of course, laugh at the whole thing as bosh, but they are serious in their belief of it."

Two days later he wrote to Hinsdale (December 16): "All our thoughts and feelings are just now absorbed in the blood and smoke of the Rappahannock. I hope the country is awaking to the truth of the doctrine I have tried to preach to them for the last six months viz—that there is no hope of the republic unless we pulverize the great rebel armies. We may take small or large cities, girdle their country with expeditions and blockade—but there is no end till their armies are broken. I have often thought of Coleridge's remark that 'abstract definitions had done more harm to the world than famine, pestilence, and war.' This may be a strong statement but I think we have a most illustrious and pestilent example of the pernicious influence of a faulty illustration. . . . I mean Gen. Scott's Anaconda, which was

going to make a second Laocoön of the rebellion. That brilliant but false idea has done more to shape the war policy of the rebellion than almost any one thing I know of. We have all the time been trying to surround the rebels. We have frittered away our strength in a whole litter of small expeditions while the enemy has concentrated his forces and whipped us in detail. . . . To crush him there is a certain fearful amount of blood to be shed, and we must hasten to shed it, where we can make the like bloody reprisals upon him. We must do this not by sharp practice . . . but by main strength. . . . But I have no words to tell you the feeling of unrest and almost personal debasement and contempt for myself I feel by being compelled to stay here, digging up the records of past blunders and misdeeds on that Court, while my brethren are struggling and bleeding. I would infinitely rather die on the Rappahannock in trying to do something than be compelled much longer to stay here."

A few days later he mentioned to his wife a new military project (December 19): "The events on the Rappahannock have cast a gloom over the whole country and I am not yet able to see what the effects will be. The country is so fearfully given up to partisan, political strifes that I almost despair of our giving the great questions of the war any calm, sensible consideration. . . . I have never despaired and I do not now but I feel as though there could not be many deeper deeps of humiliation than we have now reached. . . . Parson Brownlow is here trying to get the Pres. to send me into East Tennessee. I have no expectation that it will be done." This new plan had not even so much success as the earlier South Carolina project, but it lingered for a few weeks. On December 26 Garfield reported to his wife: "Mr. Chase told me a day or two ago that the Secretary of War said he was going to make me a Major General and give me Gen. Wright's Department with authority to go into East Tennessee and hold that country. I am now inclined to think I shall refuse the other star if it is offered. I would rather *earn it* in the field than to take it on trust of what I might do in the future. It may be necessary to settle some question

of rank. But I have not much expectation that the War Dept. will hold one mind for a whole week. If it should I may see the Cumberland Mts. again instead of the Palmettoes of the Carolinas."

Garfield now took up a new intellectual diversion, to fill his too-abundant leisure in the intervals of the Court. This was the study of the campaigns of Frederick the Great, mentioned for the first time in a letter of December 24 to Rhodes, which also marked the very lowest stage in his depression over the war and over Lincoln's weakness as the head of the army. "There is a very insidious and determined scheme on the part of the Democracy, especially that of New York, to make a kind of French *Coup d'etat* in favor of McClellan. It has been brought to light here within the past two or three days that at a dinner given to McC. by a number of the leading Democrats of N. Y. City the proposal was made with closed doors, to get the Army of the Potomac to declare for him and for him to assume the military dictatorship. It is now thought also that it was a member of his late staff who is responsible for the failure of getting the pontoons forward to Fredericksburg, and on that failure, it is now evident that our defeat depended. The officer referred to was heard to say he did not 'care a damn whether the pontoons got to him in time or not.' These things are now getting to the ears of the President and would forebode a thunder gust if there were any lightning in him. But he will doubtless respond with an anecdote and let these rascals fillip his nose or pluck his beard at pleasure. . . . I am reading Frederick the Great with a volume of plans of his battles the text of which is in French. In connection with the English biography I am reading I have but little trouble to make out the explanations of the plates but it makes me feel the need of knowing that fine language. . . . Our intolerable court has finished the prosecution and the defense will begin today. We did not meet yesterday and I took a gallop of ten miles with Kate Chase. She is a splendid rider and toward the close of our ride we came back to the city and Mr. Chase joined us. He looks finely on a horse. There was considerable talk, during

the cabinet troubles, of putting him at the head of the army."

Christmas was celebrated after an appropriate fashion. He writes (December 26): "The Ohio people here in the city gave a Christmas dinner to the Ohio soldiers (about 800) who are located in a convalescent camp at Fort Gaines about four miles out of the city and so a large party went out to cheer the boys. There was a fine dinner given them and after it speeches were made by Judge Spaulding, John Sherman, Gov. Chase, Mr. Hutchins, myself, and others. After the dinner was over I went . . . over to the Va. shore to visit Capt. Allen of the 169th New York. He is Bro Allen of Millville, N. Y. . . . He has lately raised a company and come into the service. I was pleasantly surprised to find his wife there and also to find some half dozen old College acquaintances. The colonel was at Williams a few years before me. The Surgeon graduated the year before me, and the Major (Alden) was a class-mate of Harry's. I knew several others. They had a fine Christmas supper concluding with speeches and songs."

The new year found the court still sitting, but in spite of that fact and in spite of the disappearance of the East Tennessee plan, which Garfield fully expected, there was a note of greater hopefulness in his letters. On January 6 he wrote Hinsdale: "I am still in the Court. I will not in this letter say anything about my disgust at being kept here so long, nor about the conduct of the war, nor about that strange phenomenon in the world's history, when a second-rate Illinois lawyer is the instrument to utter words which shall form an epoch memorable in all future ages (Jan. 1st 1863)." This was Garfield's only comment on the final Emancipation Proclamation. He went on to add: "I am filling up my weary hours here by reading with enthusiasm all I can find in reference to Frederick the Great and his times. Indeed I am meditating authorship in a small way, that of getting out an edition of one of Frederick's military works, with an introduction and notes."

"The evidence is all before the Court," he wrote to his wife on the same day (January 6). "To-morrow we begin

to review the evidence. Saturday, the defence of the accused will be read and that day or Monday we shall give sentence, and close our work. It has been a tremendous job, full of difficulties, requiring a great deal of labor and patience. I have no doubt but I shall get away into the field somewhere South or West as soon as we are through. I was told a few days ago by Mr. Chase, that the Stanton plan of sending me to East Tennessee was probably vetoed by Halleck and that South Carolina stood fairest to be my destination."

A few days later the prospect became still clearer (January 9). "I have no doubt but I shall be in the field somewhere in less than two weeks. The sad loss of Gen. Morgan renders it not improbable that I may be sent to take command of his Division. Indeed I wrote a letter yesterday which I have not yet sent and am not quite sure I shall do so asking the Sec. of War to send me to Gen. Morgan's command. I feel sure my destination will be there in East Tennessee or in South Carolina. Should I go West I will, if possible, call at home for a few hours. . . . I fear I shall not be able wholly to complete the preparation of my book before I leave, though I am giving all my spare moments to it. . . . If I get the manuscript done I shall try to leave it in the hands of some friend who will see to its passage through the press and get it as accurate as possible."

The manuscript for this unfinished work exists among Garfield's papers, accompanied by drawings for battle-plans made by A. Pohlers, a German draughtsman. Its place in Garfield's military education will be considered in the ensuing chapter. Here it will be pertinent to quote from the unpublished preface Garfield's statement of his reasons for undertaking the work, as an illustration of the conclusion forced upon him by his reflections on the military status of the country at the time he wrote it. "In our present war," he wrote, "the Republic is paying a fearful price for its neglect of military organization and its failure to preserve the military spirit among the people. . . . Our insular position and our wise policy of non-intervention in the affairs of other nations have rendered us measurably secure from entanglement in foreign wars, and from sudden invasions. Our

great commercial prosperity had given us a national pride and self-complacency which lulled us into a false sense of security. No nation ever so recklessly neglected the art of war, nor came so near to ruin in consequence of that neglect. . . . It is in the hope of contributing somewhat to the awakening of this spirit in our army that this edition is published."

Finally the end of the long waiting came. In the western field of operations the Army of the Cumberland had fought the bloody battle of Stone's River, December 31-January 2, and in the reorganization consequent upon the severe losses there was a call for additional experienced officers. Garfield's chance had now come. The court-martial wound up its proceedings so far as Garfield was concerned when the prosecution and defense had completed their evidence and their arguments. The verdict of the court found General Porter guilty both of disobedience to orders and of misbehavior in the presence of the enemy and sentenced him to be cashiered and forever disqualified from holding any office under the United States government. Garfield's separate opinion nowhere appears in the record, nor is there any contemporary letter of his which comments on the sentence.

On several occasions in his later life he expressed himself strongly on the subject. Writing on December 22, 1869, to General Pope, he remarked, "No public act with which I have ever been connected was ever more clear to me than the righteousness of the findings of that court which convicted Fitz John Porter." Still later, when Porter's persistent efforts at rehabilitation had brought the matter under review by a military board, Garfield again turned his attention to the matter. It was contended that the evidence drawn from the Confederate military reports, unknown at the time of the trial, proved that Porter had been justified in not delivering an attack when ordered, and the board presided over by General Schofield rendered an opinion that sustained this contention. A bill was then introduced into Congress, strongly supported by the Democrats, to provide for the reinstatement of Porter in his rank, and Garfield, feeling

himself directly involved, made a careful study of the new testimony and the old in preparation for a speech.

He wrote to Cox (February 14, 1880): "I have been so stung by the decision of the Schofield board that it is very hard to trust my own mind to speak of it as it appeared to me. I have made a strong effort to separate myself from the case and to look at it intellectually as though it related only to the pieces on the chess-board and not to living men, or to men who have ever lived." The conclusion he came to was that the Confederate testimony had no bearing on the animus shown by Porter toward Pope; and that if such a purely passive and negative policy as that of Porter could be justified, there was no basis on which to approve the daring and successful tactics of Stonewall Jackson in the same battle. It is safe to say that to Garfield's mind, at the time and later, the decisive thing was the spirit in which Porter acted, and that spirit he felt to be essentially hostile to Pope's authority and Pope's success. Before taking leave of this episode in Garfield's career it ought to be said that the predominant opinion among military critics and students is in favor of Porter's military correctness and adverse to the justice of the sentence. Be that as it may, one is not called upon to condemn the judges for having taken the occasion to punish, harshly perhaps, but not extravagantly, what they honestly deemed to be an instance of a military egotism that was corroding the morale of the whole army.

The Judge Advocate wrote his review of the sentence January 19 and it was approved by the President January 21, but by that time Garfield was far from the city. On January 14, by Special Order No. 21, "Brig. Gen. J. A. Garfield is assigned to duty in the army of the Cumberland under Maj. Gen. Rosecrans to whose headquarters he will repair and report in person." Garfield wrote to Chase, that same day: "I am exceedingly sorry not to see you again before leaving Washington, but I must start to-day for Tennessee to report to Gen. Rosecrans. I choose that field because I believe there is more life and work in the west and that the chief hope of the country rests in that army. I wish you to add another to the many kindnesses you have shown me. I will be particu-

larly obliged if you will write a letter to Gen. Rosecrans. Mr. Stanton suggested it. Of course I take my chances of having only a brigade, though I would like a division. . . . If there should ever be anything in which I can serve you I hope you will command me."

Garfield went first to his family at Hiram, where, in addition to enjoying a few days of the home life he had been hungering for, he took occasion to regulate his business and other affairs. Then, on January 19, he left for the southward and, pushing forward slowly, delayed by sluggish trains and poor connections, he reached his destination at Rosecrans's headquarters on January 25. So ended the long months of sickness, depression and hope deferred. In them enough had happened to have filled the life of a man in any ordinary circumstances with interest and excitement—the election to Congress, the long stay at Washington, the opportunity to see the inside workings of the government as Chase's guest, the revelations from the important service on the Fitz-John Porter court-martial—all these were of permanent importance and influence on Garfield's life. But, under the overpowering pressure of the war, his own longing to serve his country in the army prevented him, as he frequently remarked in his letters, from adequately enjoying his privileges as spectator or participant. It was not until later years that, in retrospect, he realized the significance of these experiences.

CHAPTER IX
CHIEF OF STAFF, ARMY OF THE
CUMBERLAND

1863

GARFIELD described his arrival at the headquarters of the Army of the Cumberland in a letter to his wife (January 25, 1863): "I reached here at five o'clock this evening after a ride of seven hours. I had an escort of 20 men and narrowly escaped a fight with a large body of rebel cavalry which came down the Nashville pike from Franklin and destroyed a few cars and captured 25 of our men only two or three miles from us. . . . I have had an interview with Gen. Rosecrans who has been quite sick, indeed has been confined to his bed for several days with an attack of lung fever. He was very friendly and received me with the familiarity of an old friend. I did not introduce business but as I came out he asked me to come in again in the morning, saying he was glad to have me with him, and that there were two or three divisions 'fishing' for me."

The next morning Garfield continued: "I am greatly pleased with some features of Gen. Rosecrans' character. He has that fine quality of having his mind made up on all the questions which concern his work. In a military man this is a cardinal virtue. The whole texture of generalship is made up of theories which his mind must form of the position, force, and intentions of his enemy and he must shape his course, take his resolutions and act upon them in accordance with his theory. Hence a man who does not think decisively, and place full and implicit confidence upon his own judgment cannot act with confidence. Gen. R thinks rapidly and strikes forward into action with the utmost confidence in his own judgment. In this he is perfectly unlike McClellan who rarely has a clear-cut, decisive opinion and dares not trust it when he has. The officers whom I have met since I came

here seem to have the most unbounded confidence in Rosy and are enthusiastic in his praise. He is the most Spanish-looking man I know of—a kind of Don Menendez face—and though he swears fiercely, yet he is a Jesuit of the highest style of Roman piety. He carries a cross attached to his watch seal and as he drew his watch out of his side pants pocket his rosary, a dirty-looking string of friars beads, came out with it. There is much in his appearance that is striking and singular. He remembered me very well, commenced at once to talk of my Sandy Valley campaign and our correspondence while I was there. Nearly midnight last night he came out after I had gone to bed and though he was sick he staid and talked for an hour till his darkey came and took him by the shoulder and led him away to bed.”

Thus began one of the most peculiar episodes in Garfield's life, his association with General Rosecrans; for the commanding general apparently from the first developed such a strong liking for his new subordinate that the consequences were almost ludicrous. In a letter of January 27 to Rhodes, Garfield described with amazement the successive steps in his new relationship. “Last night,” he wrote, “I went into the General's room to see him and he insisted I should sleep in the room. We sat up till two o'clock notwithstanding his illness and my frequent remonstrances that he should go to bed. We discussed a great range of questions of war, government, and religion. I find him a man of very decided and muscular thoughts and with the rare Friedrich-like quality of having his mind made up on every important question. I do not think him a great man, in the sense of being a comprehensive and profound thinker, but for sharp, clear sense, ready, decisive judgment and bold self-reliant action he is certainly very admirable and hence an effective general.”

Garfield then described Rosecrans's religious experience, which had the peculiarity of being a voluntary adoption of Catholicism and of the Christian life as defined by the Catholic church, a purely intellectual decision, the whole being done in a strictly experimental spirit. “I was anxious,”

commented Garfield, "to know what he would say about swearing, which he indulges in very freely, especially when he is roused. He said, 'I do still curse and damn when I am indignant but I never blaspheme the name of God.' He made a distinction between *profanity* and *blasphemy*. . . . He said he wanted an authorized supernatural teacher and the only three claimants for that place were the Roman Catholics, the Greek Catholics, and the Episcopalians. I cannot give you all the details now, but it was exceedingly interesting. Before retiring he took out his rosary and knelt for five or ten minutes beside his bed. It was three o'clock before our conversation ceased. I don't know but he thought he could proselyte me. I expect a command will be assigned me today or tomorrow."

But Garfield was not destined to receive a command. Instead of that, he found himself, to his bewilderment, installed as roommate and debating companion of the general. "A few days ago," Garfield reported to his wife (February 1), "I went and got rooms and board a few squares distant from here. Just after I got to bed and had gone asleep an orderly came in with a written order from the General, peremptorily ordering me to return and sleep in his room and board with him till I should be assigned to duty." Garfield was again the guest and confidant of one of the foremost personalities of the time, a situation pleasant enough at first, but not at all to his taste for any prolonged stay.

A few days later he was again showing signs of uneasiness over his inaction. His staff and his horses had been delayed by the rebel raids. "I try to be patient," he said (February 5), "but I have neither the opportunity to do anything very useful nor have I any opportunity to read or write except as I sit down in a public room crowded with officers and all kinds of people on all kinds of business. I hope soon to see my 'Harry' and 'Bill' and have something to do. Gen. Rosecrans spoke of putting me in command of Nashville, which, though a very important and pleasant command, I would not so soon have as a command in the field."

Meanwhile his chief function seemed to be to divert his commander with theological discussion. "But for the fact

that Gen. Rosecrans seems to want me with him all the while and occupies almost every moment of my time," he wrote his wife (February 13), "I should be very uneasy at the long delay in getting to work. I sat up with the Gen. last night till 4 o'clock talking constantly and incessantly on religion. He is the intensest religionist I ever saw. If we did not sleep till ten or twelve in the morning I should be worn out. . . . I have written this with a crowd around me and the floor joggling at every word." The next day, writing to Rhodes, he gave further particulars. "Since I wrote you last I have been engaged in the most fearful dissipation in regard to sleep. For ten nights I have not gone to bed once before 2:30 o'clock in the morning, frequently not till four. After one o'clock the General and I have given ourselves up to the discussion of religion, literature and war—but chiefly the former topic."

The result of these nocturnal debates was that Rosecrans came to a decision of much importance, which, to Garfield, presented an utterly unforeseen problem. "My life," he remarked to Rhodes (February 14, 1863), "you sometimes say has been made up of a series of accidents, mostly of a favorable character. Perhaps this is true. Certain it is that I am perpetually in a series of unexpected fixes, not at all sure how I shall come out nor always clear how I ought to come out. At the present moment I am in one that puzzles me more than almost any other of my life. Day before yesterday my horses arrived and I was thus ready for duty. Last evening Gen. Rosecrans spoke to me substantially as follows—'Garfield, I have now got a division ready for you, the one formerly commanded by Gen. Van Cleve, but I want to ask you what you think of staying here with me and taking the place as my Chief of Staff. I am almost alone in regard to counsel and assistance in my plans, and I want a power concentrated here that can reach out through the entire army and give it unity and strength.' I evaded an answer and have taken the matter under advisement today.

"Considered personally, Gen. Rosecrans could not pay me a higher compliment, nor in any way express more confidence in me. Furthermore if by Chief of his Staff he does not

mean merely a chief clerk, but an adviser, a kind of *alter ego* I have no doubt while the confidence remains I could do more service there than in any other [position] in this army. Were the staff organization here what it is in Europe that would be the most important and desirable position next to the Commanding General himself. But our staff corps is not such. Could I in this case make it so? Could I in fact do a greater service to the country in this capacity than as a General of Division? Would the Army and the Country think so? Would I be considered as having taken a step up or down? By taking that position I should make a large investment in Gen. Rosecrans and will it be wise to risk so much stock in that market? Quite probably I have but a limited number of months to remain in the army—to which side of the question should that fact incline me? Such are the questions both of public and personal policy which are before me and which I must decide long before this reaches you. It is a matter of great delicacy to manage. I should have added, also, the effect that such a course would have on the regular army officers towards the General and toward me.”

Mixed motives undoubtedly led Rosecrans to make this offer. For the most part it was his personal liking for Garfield and his belief that he could be of real service to him. Rosecrans was quoted as saying, after the war: “When he came to my headquarters I must confess that I had a prejudice against him, as I understood he was a preacher who had gone into politics and a man of that cast I was naturally opposed to. The more I saw of him, the better I liked him, and finally I gave him his choice of a brigade or to become chief of staff.”¹

But it cannot be overlooked that Garfield brought with him to Murfreesboro a considerable political prestige. He was a Congressman-elect, and liable to be called out of the army the moment a session was summoned. Already he was being made to realize this fact by receiving letters from office seekers in the nineteenth district, on which he turned for advice to his friend Austin. But still more important,

¹ Bundy, *Life of Gen. J. A. Garfield*, p. 63.

he had been preceded or accompanied to Rosecrans's headquarters by letters which showed that he was highly regarded by two members of the Cabinet. Garfield had asked Chase for a letter of recommendation, and doubtless the latter wrote one which has not been preserved. Stanton, Secretary of War and Rosecrans's superior, sent a note saying: "Gen. Garfield is an officer who has distinguished himself for faithful service to the country, is brave, energetic and loyal. I hope that you will give him a command corresponding with his merits." It is highly probable that Rosecrans considered the political advantages which might accrue from having so strongly patronized an officer, soon to enter Congress, at his headquarters.

Of this Garfield seems to have been wholly unconscious. Some persons even felt that he was Chase's personal agent with the army, which, of course, was utterly imaginary, as is indicated by the following letter to his Washington protector (February 15). "My Dear Friend," he began, "I have been the guest of Gen. Rosecrans since my arrival and he has shown me all the kindness and consideration that I could desire. I think I have seen the interior of Gen. Rosecrans' nature as fully as I ever did that of any man I ever knew and am glad to tell you that I believe in him, that he is sound to the bone on the great questions of the war, and the way it should be conducted. . . . If the country and the government will stand by him I feel sure that he will justify their highest expectations."

The next two weeks were for Garfield a period of suspense and unrest, for Rosecrans did not come to a final decision until February 26, and meanwhile he himself was subjected to pressure from persons who held that unless he resigned from the army on March 4 his election to Congress would be invalidated. This point had been raised in the preceding September by Hutchins, his defeated rival, but Garfield set his own mind at rest in a few days. He wrote to Austin (September 25): "I have looked into the matter further and talked with Gov. Chase and Gen. Banks. They agree with me that I will not need to resign until Congress meets." With that he let the matter drop; but after he had gone to Mur-

freesboro the issue was revived in a more threatening form. In letters to his wife at this time (February 22) he reported: "I have lately received several letters from members of Congress informing me of the action taken by the House in regard to the case of Col. Vanderveer of Iowa who was a member and served during the first session of the present Congress and then accepted a commission in the army. The Committee appointed to report on his case reported that the acceptance of a military commission forfeited his right to the seat, and also expressed the opinion that no man could hold a commission in the army during any part of the two years for which he was elected. On this they have urged me to resign on the 4th of March. In that election I fear I have drawn an elephant. If it seems best to resign, I think I shall serve, till Congress meets, in some capacity without rank or pay, so that I may do something for the country in its struggles."

By February 26 the military assignment matter was settled. On that day Garfield wrote home: "I have long made it a point to use philosophy and not give way to sad and gloomy feelings. I do so now, but the complications of questions, Congressional and military, and especially my long stay here in comparative idleness and inactivity conspire to make me dissatisfied and sad. The continued dreary rain, the broken and devastated country with its impassable roads, and the dreary batallions that go dripping and soiled to their daily monotony of mingled labor and idleness all act with depressing force on one's spirits. . . . The question of what I shall be assigned to has not been a mere formal matter. If I was to have been put in command of a Division the decision would have been easy, but the place of Chief of Staff was one of more gravity and more important results. In the first place Gen. R. wanted to know me so thoroughly as to be sure that I was the man he wanted. It was, in the next place, necessary that he should find out what the opinions and feelings of such officers as his leading Corps Commanders were in reference to the matter. These consultations have been held, and long and searching conversations between the General and myself have been held in reference to

it. I have almost wholly abstained from writing to my friends till I should know what my work was to be. I have not been unaware of the fact that I should lose credit and my personal and military reputation to some extent injured by the long delay. My experience in delay in Washington and here has been one of the most trying of my life. It has tried my powers of endurance and my natural restlessness more than it was ever tried before. I have gone through all the cycles of restlessness and chafing impatience until I think I have learned to endure with a considerable degree of patience if not with meekness what is laid upon me.

"Since I began to write this letter at the General's table he has written an order and has just now shown it to me assigning me to duty as Chief of his staff. It will be printed tomorrow and I shall proceed to duty at once. So the long agony is over and true [to] the perverseness of human nature I shall no doubt regret that I am not in command of a Division, but I shall nevertheless go to work thoroughly and vigorously to make as much out of this army as I can. I presume that the first impression of my assignment to duty will be unfortunate in the minds of my friends abroad, but I am willing to bear that, from the knowledge that I am chosen here because it is regarded as a great necessity and though I may not make as much reputation as I could in another place yet I can exercise more influence in the army and more fully impress my views and policy on its administration."

This appointment carried with it the decision to risk losing his seat in Congress. Garfield wrote to his wife March 3, sending "a series of letters from prominent men in Washington in regard to the Congressional question, which I desire to have preserved. I expect to make use of them in a certain contingency which may arise. I have determined to stay in the army, and when the time comes, if I can be of more service in Congress than here I will go and make a test of my right to the seat which I think is clear."

The position Garfield now held is, as he said, in modern armies, second only to that of the commanding general. In 1861-1862 the American armies, Union and Confederate,

were badly deficient in comprehension of the importance of staff organization and the tendency had been to regard members of the staff as little more than secretaries and messengers. The idea that the staff should have the most energetic and most highly trained among the officers available—the European idea—was so far from prevailing that even Rosecrans had a staff composed entirely of volunteer officers, taken directly from civil life, with practically no training. By 1863, however, the absolute necessity of having some men of large caliber in every staff was impressing itself on the commanding generals of all the armies and the earlier chiefs of staff—often lieutenant colonels—were supplanted by general officers such as G. K. Warren in the Army of the Potomac and Garfield in the Army of the Cumberland.

Garfield's functions were to receive all reports and to draft all important orders under the commander's instructions. He prepared all routine business for him and collected and organized all military information. But his assistance went a good deal further than this office work, as will be seen from some of his letters. He framed plans for operations, or movements, when so ordered, and submitted them for consideration, taking in this way the initial steps before every important strategic decision. He had to be enough of a military student and expert to be able to plan a campaign or a battle sufficiently well to relieve his commander of all but critical study and final decisions. This Garfield seems to have done, as will be shown presently, wholly to Rosecrans's satisfaction. Of course such planning does not in any way diminish the responsibility of Rosecrans for any campaign, and to attempt to give credit to the subordinate on such occasions at the expense of the commanding general is wholly to misconceive the situation. In later years some of Garfield's injudicious admirers made this claim, which was characterized by General J. D. Cox, a warm friend of Garfield but a close student of war, in words that deserve quotation. "The effort which has sometimes been made to apportion the credit due to the commanding general and to his principal staff officer . . . seems to me necessarily a futile one. In the intimate personal association of friends engaged in a common

cause, it is impossible to say what each contributes to the common stock. . . . The staff officer in this respect by virtue of his position consents as it were to lose himself for the time in the personality of his chief and to devote his energies to making his commander's work a success."¹

Viewing Garfield's position in this light, it is clearly unnecessary to study in detail the strategy and military administration of the Army of the Cumberland during his tenure of the office of chief of staff. Although his name is signed to hundreds of dispatches, orders and messages, they do not represent his will or authority but that of Rosecrans. Doubtless he drafted nearly all of them himself, often without consulting his commander, but their only importance came from their being issued in the name of the commanding general. As to their phraseology, it appears that Garfield took pains to make every dispatch explicit, clear and self-explanatory. It was his business to make the corps or division commander to whom he wrote understand precisely what was wanted of him and what the military object was. As compared with Rosecrans himself, who occasionally wrote his own orders, he was less terse, less abrupt and more explanatory.

A further question presents itself before considering Garfield's career in 1863, namely, this: Where did he derive the military knowledge which enabled him to plan campaigns or movements? In the first place he seems to have studied such military history as was within his reach. In the winter of 1861 he wrote home that he was reading "the campaigns of Napoleon and Wellington," and Corydon Fuller, describing a visit to the room where he was lodged with Cox, says, "Their table was covered with books on military science and both of them spent all their leisure time in studying the art of war."² A volume on the art of war, written by Emil Schalk and dedicated to the United States Volunteer Army, is among Garfield's books, bearing his name on the flyleaf with the date January, 1863. This is an attempt to apply the principles of Jomini to the military problems presented in

¹ Cox, "Early Life of J. A. Garfield," in *Society of Army of Cumberland*, 1882, p. 103.

² Fuller, *Reminiscences of J. A. Garfield*, p. 303.

Virginia, but it bears little evidence of handling and it is not likely that Garfield took it on his campaigns. More important, in all probability, was the influence upon him of the *Secret Instructions of Frederick II to his Inspector Generals*, upon which he was working during December and January. The contents of this work, which he translated with a view to publication, consisted of no less than twenty-eight plans of military problems with their solution, or proper method of handling, worked out by the royal author. There were also three plans of actual battles, Rossbach, Leuthen and Prag, with accompanying notes. It was from his careful reading of the teachings embodied in these military studies, which dealt with all sorts of situations and all varieties of terrain, that Garfield, without doubt, absorbed such conceptions of military art as enabled him to draft campaign plans and write orders for battles. The influence of this book on his thinking has been shown in the frequent allusions to it contained in his early letters from Murfreesboro and in the present chapter, especially in his analysis of the necessary qualities of generalship.

So began the final stage of Garfield's military career in a form which had never, during the long months of waiting and repining, presented itself as a possibility. Instead of escaping to an independent command, far from the blighting influence of "West Point," as he had dreamed, he was in the closest possible relations not only with a West Point superior—Rosecrans was of the class of 1843—but with corps and division commanders nearly all of whom were graduates of the military academy. They were, moreover, the very men with whom and under whom he had served in 1862, and from whose bearing and methods he had learned to distrust if not to detest professional soldiership. The situation was one to put on trial not only his tact and fairness, but also his powers of clear thinking and his ability to sink prejudice. Nothing was more certain than that if for a moment he seemed to be acting as though inspired by the suspicions and dislikes of 1862 it would render his position unendurable. Only by commanding the full confidence of all the generals associated with Rosecrans could a chief of staff

play his part in safety. As Blaine remarked in his eulogy,¹ "An indiscreet man in such a position can sow more discord, breed more jealousy and disseminate more strife than any other officer in the entire army."

Garfield's home correspondence as chief of staff is fairly full, but in it one sees at once that he absolutely excluded any criticisms upon persons or any information concerning personages in the army. All the free fault-finding which had marked his letters under Buell and at Washington was blotted out. Nothing is to be learned from them of any personal questions that arose during Garfield's eight months' service. Whatever influence he exerted on points of personnel has to be gathered from scanty allusions elsewhere.

General Stanley, in his memoirs, says that his division commanders were "dictated by Garfield and worse could not be found. Turchin was a fat, short-legged Russian who could not ride a horse, and Robert Mitchell, a politician, always thinking of the votes he could make in Kansas. Two such cavalry subordinates were never before imposed on a cavalry commander."² It is impossible to say how true this is, as Stanley's reminiscences were written long after the event and in a savagely fault-finding temper. More authentic, probably, is an account in Reid's sketch of Garfield, of his effort to replace McCook and Crittenden as corps commanders by McDowell and Buell. "General Garfield made the recommendation . . . in the course of a discussion of the battle of Stone River, in which Rosecrans explicitly said that these officers had shown themselves incompetent in that engagement. Garfield did not take the ground that these officers (McDowell and Buell) had approved themselves equal to the high commands that they had formerly held; but without discussing this, he argued at length their masterly qualifications for important subordinate positions, as well as the fact that this offer of an opportunity to come out from the cloud under which they rested would insure their gratitude and incite them to their very best efforts." Rose-

¹ *Sen. Misc. Doc. No. 123, 47 Cong., 1 sess., p. 20.*

² D. S. Stanley, "Personal Memoirs," in *Military Historian and Economist*, 1917, p. 156.

crans, however, was unwilling to remove McCook and Crittenden; 'he hated to injure two such good fellows.' " This probably was based on Garfield's personal information.¹

At the time that Garfield returned to the front, the general military situation, after months of fighting, was not greatly different from what it had been when he left the army under Buell, six months earlier. In the East, the Army of the Potomac, after the bloody repulse at Fredericksburg, still confronted the Confederates across the Rappahannock and was in a state of great depression and discouragement under Burnside's inadequate command. Not until Hooker assumed charge, January 26, and began a general reorganization did its morale show signs of returning. On the Mississippi, Grant's army, having thoroughly failed in its first attempt to advance by land against Vicksburg, was preparing under its indefatigable commander for a new series of efforts to find some practicable way of approaching that stronghold. Rosecrans's army, at Murfreesboro, had come nearer to success in the drawn battle of Stone's River, December 31-January 2, than either of the other Union armies, but was badly exhausted and shaken by the effort and needed a period of reorganization. For the time being, all the armies were quiescent, preparing for greater efforts when spring arrived.

Garfield's experience as chief of staff opened in a period when outpost affairs and raids were the only form of hostilities. The Army of the Cumberland lay along an east and west line south of Murfreesboro supplied by the railroad running south from Nashville. Against it, not many miles to the southward, lay stretched the Confederates under General Bragg, posted in a strong position behind Duck River, with the southern continuation of the same railroad serving to connect it with its base at Bridgeport and Chattanooga. The movements of each army were largely conditioned by their dependence on this line. When the Union forces should move, they must deal with the same body of men who, two months before, at the battle of Murfreesboro or Stone's River, had barely fallen short of driving them wholly off the

¹ Reid, *Ohio in the War*, Vol. I, p. 752.

field by the ferocity of their attack. All the generals and privates of the Army of the Cumberland had a wholesome respect for their antagonists and none were in any hurry to resume fighting, Rosecrans least of all.

Within a week from the time Garfield assumed his new duties, he was given his first test of ability in helping Rosecrans and in writing dispatches, when the Confederate General Van Dorn, with considerable bodies of cavalry, supported by infantry and artillery, made a series of raids and demonstrations against the Union advanced detachments, to which the Northern commander retorted by sending out similar expeditions. The result was a succession of petty skirmishes and occasionally something approaching a battle. On March 5, for instance, a Union brigade under Colonel Coburn, advancing southward from Franklin on a reconnoissance in force, encountered the main body of Van Dorn's command at Thompson's Station, and, marching into a gap between two hills, suffered itself to be surrounded and captured after a sharp fight. Garfield commented on this in a home letter, March 11, saying: "In a few moments lull of business I have scratched off for you a little plot of the late disaster at Thompson's station south of Franklin where the rebs drew our military fools into a regular cul-de-sac and then closed up on them and captured them. The rebs on the hill and behind the stone fence and cedar thicket kept concealed until our fools got into the bag, going up to charge the rebel batteries. . . . You can see how perfectly they might have avoided the whole disgrace by keeping out scouts a mile on each side and a mile ahead as they ought to have done."

Garfield's next letters are interesting as suggesting his military ideas and his conception of his duties as chief of staff. First he drew a rough sketch-map. With this as guide he wrote to Rhodes (March 9): "Like one who has lighted a slow match to fire a magazine and is waiting for the explosion, so I am awaiting the results of last night's work. . . . This game of chess has become complicated." He then showed how, on March 8, news came from two quarters that heavy forces of the enemy were concentrating on Steedman's

seven regiments at Triune, and that it was practically impossible to send reinforcements directly to him from the west owing to the road having been made impassable by Sheridan's division marching to Franklin, where Granger, without orders, had summoned him. "Thus Steedman was in imminent danger and how to extricate or relieve him was the question. To reinforce him before the enemy could attack him was impossible, or, in the language of chess he was *en prise*, and there was no piece which we could interpose. We must either withdraw him or attack a more vulnerable piece of the adversary.



----- are dirt roads almost impassable now in consequence of the mud -

"Gen. R. was at first strongly in favor of ordering Steedman to retreat. I opposed this, arguing that he could only withdraw in one of three directions, viz Nolansville, Stewart'sboro, or Murfreesboro. If he should take either of the

former two routes the rebels could follow him with cavalry and destroy him much more easily than they could in his fortifications at Triune. If he took the latter route, they could strike across, . . . capture him and escape. I earnestly urged to have him stand and fight in his intrenchments; meanwhile we should push forth a heavy force from Franklin to Raleigh Hill and another from here via Versailles to Eaglesville and either attack the rebels in the rear while they were fighting Steedman, or catch them on the return if they had captured him. . . . This view was finally adopted and I have just finished instructions to all the forces to be sent out. During the night I wrote more than 25 pages of dispatches and letters of instruction and now at a quarter before six in the morning I am scratching this word to you and shall soon lie down to get a little sleep. Of course I am exceedingly anxious to know the developments but I believe when the rebels come to know our movements they will back out. . . . I feel that this plan, which is my own, will do me personally great harm or a considerable good."

As a matter of fact, the rebels did "back out." The *Official Records* show that Steedman needed only to fire a few shells at them before they departed and the two columns which pushed forward from Franklin and Murfreesboro to trap them found nothing to catch.¹ The letter shows, however, the essentially aggressive character of Garfield's temper in contrast with that of his commander. He wrote home while the movement was still in progress (March 11): "I haven't the time to tell you of the problem we were solving when I wrote to H. only to say that the enemy's advance attacked Steedman but fearing our rear movements, only waited long enough to get their noses bloody and then ran off. Granger is still out after them south of Franklin. I have been interrupted since I began this half sheet six times and now four telegraphic dispatches have come and I must close." Three days later he remarked, "We have withdrawn our forces from the pursuit of Van Dorn, after chasing him across the Duck River and are getting ready to open another course of operations."

¹ *Official Records*, Vol. XXIII, pt. i, pp. 141-145.

In all these movements the *Official Records* show that the Union army was compelled to employ infantry as well as cavalry, owing to the fact that their number of the latter arm was far inferior to the Confederate cavalry and needed infantry support in any movement likely to encounter the full Confederate strength. This situation was a sore point with Rosecrans, who, from November, 1862, when he began his demand for additional cavalry, pushed his complaints with increasing asperity, always declaring himself ready to advance when he should have a sufficient mounted force. The administration, on the other hand, through Stanton and Halleck, professed inability to furnish him any more horses and constantly urged him to begin his campaign. After weeks of this sort of thing, signs of marked irritability began to appear on both sides.¹

It was into this situation that Garfield stepped, for while, as chief of staff, he was bound to share Rosecrans's troubles with his superiors, he was, according to Reid, wholly out of sympathy with Rosecrans's contentious and complaining attitude. "Garfield," says Reid, "was the intimate associate and confidential adviser of his chief. But he did not occupy so commanding a position as to be able to put restraint upon him. . . . He did all in his power to soften the tone of asperity which his chief adopted in his dispatches to Washington. Sometimes he took the responsibility of totally suppressing an angry message. Oftener he ventured to soften the phraseology. But in all this there was a limit beyond which he could not go."² Reid was intimate with Garfield and this information was probably derived from him. But no such statement ever appeared over Garfield's own name. The nearest he came was when, in a letter of 1871, explaining why Rosecrans was not reinforced until after the battle of Chickamauga, he said, "The imperious and curt dispatches of Rosecrans . . . had displeased the Sec. of War and Gen. Halleck and they did not give that heed to his representations and requests that they really deserved." (Colonel E. Szabad, April 21, 1871.)

¹ Reid, *Ohio in the War*, Vol. I, pp. 336-338.

² *Ibid.*, p. 751.

So far as the tone of Garfield's letters goes, it would appear that he laid far less stress on the necessity for additional cavalry than did his chief. By the end of March he was beginning to look forward to the opening of an aggressive campaign. "I have hardly a moment to think of anything but this struggle," he wrote his wife (March 26). "It will be worth ten thousand lives if we can break the power of the rebellion this season. I don't think the conflict will be tried here for some weeks yet but it must come. These two armies can no more live in the present situation long, than wild tigers and lions can dwell in the same lair. Cpts. Swaim and Farrar are in the Scout department and directly under my charge. It opens gulfs of intrigue and treachery on the part of the rebels. We must oppose cunning to cunning. It is a singularly curious and interesting department." This is Garfield's only reference to a feature of his service as chief of staff on which his biographer of the Forty-second regiment lays especial emphasis.¹

As the roads gradually dried, the army grew more active, not only in the raids and outpost affairs with which the *Official Record* is crowded, but with drills and improvements in the organization. Garfield's letters reveal incessant pressure in the staff work. He said (March 26): "You may think it strange when I tell you that I have not been able for the last two days to finish even this little sheet, but such is the fact. We had reviews yesterday and the day before, which consumed five hours each and I have had my hands overflowing full of work on my return. Night before last I got to bed at half past one and last night at 2 o'clock. I take this morning while the General is at his breakfast to write a few words with a pile of telegrams beside me to be answered. I have been laying out two plans which I much desire that you and the little circle shall know and yet I dare not write it to you except in cipher."

The last words in the quotation point to the fact that before he had been a month in his position Garfield was undertaking to get up a novel expedition on his own motion. This was the well-known raid which was suggested by Colonel

¹ Mason, *Forty-Second Ohio Infantry*, p. 96.

Streight of the Fifty-first Indiana and taken up energetically by Garfield with Rosecrans's permission. The plan, in brief, was this; to send a force of mounted infantry far around behind the Confederate position with instructions to reach the single line of railway that connected the Confederate army with central Georgia and blow up bridges in such wise as to render it useless for a considerable period. The country was difficult, mountainous, and little known to Northerners, the distances to be traveled very considerable, and the raiding force was practically certain to be captured. But Streight and his men were ready to make the effort and in view of the serious situation in which such a blow, if successful, would leave the Confederates in Tennessee, Garfield felt it was worth trying. It was a cardinal part of his plan, also, that so soon as the news of Streight's success should arrive, the Army of the Cumberland must assume the offensive sharply.

Garfield's letters during April show his great activity in camp and army routine, and simultaneously his absorption in his new plan. On April 10 he began to write openly. "I have had the entire burden of getting up and fitting out the expedition of Col. Streight. You can hardly imagine how deep is my interest in the result. Our forces are now in a very interesting position. We have gained some brilliant little successes lately but shall soon test the strength of the mass of the rebel army. The Gen. has now gone out to the fortifications, and told me to lay a plan for the capture of Van Dorn and present it to him when he came in. I shall go at it as soon as I close this letter which must be soon."

A letter which he wrote at this time to Chase (April 12), shows his expectations of a prompt aggressive movement to accompany or follow the raid, and it also reflects, no doubt, the view which he, with Rosecrans, took of the general strategy of the situations. "You have probably seen from the papers that Gen. R. has chosen me as his chief of staff. I have now been serving in that capacity for nearly two months. During this time we have been steadily at work to prepare this army for its great work, and I am glad to tell [you] that it is now nearly ready. . . . One thing was set-

tled soon after my arrival, and that was that it is useless to advance into the rebel territory, unless we are prepared to hold the ground we win in battle. This cannot be done until we make our supplies secure. We have, therefore, established a triangle of posts, with Nashville as its northern apex, and Franklin and Murfreesboro as its base, facing South. These points we have strengthened by erecting by far the best fortifications built during this war. At the same time we have used every available pound of transportation power to bring up supplies and store them in their several places, so that we now have rations to last till September and forage till July. We have communicated with Gen. Burnside, who responds generously to all our requests and has promised to move forward and hold the line of the Cumberland, thus securing our rear. At the same time he will push a column into east Tennessee, and put his New England troops abreast of us in line of battle. His forces are now in motion to take the place assigned them. That done, it relieves four of our brigades, now doing garrison and railroad duty in the rear. The army will then be footloose and will move. As we climb we can pull the ladder up behind us without danger. The enemy may then cut off our railroad if he can and we will not be compelled to turn back. This army is in most excellent condition. The froth has run off and the weak elements are worked out. There is scarcely a regiment that has not been in more than one hard-fought battle. The men are reduced to solid muscle and brawn, and they have that esprit de corps which I have never yet known in any other army. The country has a right to expect great things from this army, and I do not believe it will be disappointed.

He wrote to his wife (April 21): "The expedition has drawn heavily on all my hours since I did not get to bed till 4 this morning. Everything seems to be working well and I hope good results from the expedition. You will probably see in the papers before this reaches you that Gen. Dodge's force from Corinth has fought the rebels near Tusculumbia and driven them. This is all right and just in the line of our wishes. Col. Streight will make himself heard from in the course of a week or two from now I think." The course of

the expedition in these days was as follows: leaving Nashville April 11 it went down the Cumberland, then after waiting at Fort Henry on the Tennessee went up that river, in steamers, April 17, to Eastport, where it joined a force under Gen. Dodge. The combined body pushed eastward to Tusculum April 24, where they then separated, Dodge confronting the Confederates and driving back small forces, Streight turning southeastward and pushing forward toward his destination, over one hundred and fifty miles away, across the mountains. The last report from Streight himself was dated April 26. Then came silence.

Under such circumstances of tension, a latent vein of mysticism frequently crops out in soldiers. This is seen in the tone of Garfield's letter of April 25, in commenting upon an episode in no way mysterious taken in itself. "Indeed I did remember your birthday [April 19]," he wrote. "There was heavy cannonading heard by nearly every body in camp and the troops were ordered under arms but strange to say we could not learn of any firing at any of our outposts. I told Gen. R. that it must be a salute to the first battle of the revolution, or to the slaughter of Massachusetts men in Baltimore, 1861, or to your birthday. He adopted the latter suggestion. The occurrence was exceedingly strange. The Gen. and I went out and listened, and could hear rapid and heavy firing as if of a whole battery in close engagement. It continued for nearly half an hour and yet we are now sure there was no firing in any of our camps nor outposts. I am half inclined to be superstitious about it. Do you remember the appearance of armies and battles in the clouds during the siege of Jerusalem? (vide Josephus)"

On May 2 he reported: "Dodge just shoved back the folding doors of the enemy and Streight slipped through. They have closed behind him and we shall not hear a word more till we hear it from rebel sources. The plan has thus far worked admirably. I could not wish it changed in any particular—only I wish I were at the head of it. I offered to go and Gen. R. could not spare me. It is nearly time for him to strike the road. By our calculations before, he would probably reach it to-day."

By this time the whole situation was growing very tense and Garfield's letters to his correspondents indicate the feeling on his part that great events were impending. He felt strongly that the Union effort must take the shape of an attempt to crush or cripple Bragg's army, not merely to occupy more territory. In a letter to his old friend Fuller¹ (May 4), he explained his hopes. "From all the present indications it can not be long before we meet the rebel army now in our front and try its strength again. When the day comes it bids fair to be the bloodiest fighting of the war. One thing is settled in my mind: direct blows at the rebel army—bloody fighting—is all that can end the rebellion. In European wars, if you capture the chief city of a nation, you have substantially captured the nation. . . . Not so in this war. The rebels have no city the capture of which will overthrow their power. If we take Richmond, the rebel government can be put on wheels and trundled away into the interior with all its archives in two days. Hence our real objective point is not any place or district, but the rebel army wherever we find it. We must crush and pulverize them and then all places and territories fall into our hands as a consequence. These views lead me to hope and believe that before many days we shall join in a death-grapple with Bragg and Johnston. God grant that we may be successful. . . . The armies are nearly equal in numbers, and both are full of valiant soldiers, well drilled and disciplined."

The time was now approaching when, if the plan succeeded, Rosecrans should develop an offensive. The General, mindful of his communications, wished General Burnside, commanding the Department of the Ohio, to advance troops into middle Tennessee to protect the railroads. On May 3 General Hartsuff, bearing Burnside's reply, met with Rosecrans and his corps commanders in a council of war. If the Streight raid was a success the moment to strike was at hand and Garfield undoubtedly urged this view. "A council of war was held last evening," he wrote to his wife (May 4), "and though I cannot speak of the result, I will say that I do not think two weeks can pass without a collision. Hooker

¹ Fuller, *Reminiscences of J. A. Garfield*, p. 336.

seems to be in motion now; Banks has been and is doing gloriously; there seems to be hope in the Vicksburg expedition and when we meet the enemy the fire will flash all along the line. This will be a battle summer. . . . Some day I hope to tell you of the council of last night. It is one thing to express an opinion at home—it is quite another to express one and stake your life on it a few hours afterward. It tries the stuff that men are made of.”

The next day he wrote to Chase (May 5): “The situation here is now very interesting. The two armies now confronting each other here will I think have a collision soon. Gen. Hartsuff was sent here by Gen. Burnside and night before last a council was held to determine upon a plan of operation by which Gen. B’s force—a part of it at least—should move in conjunction with ours. I have been anxious to impress upon you the truth that our true objective point of operations is the rebel army and not any particular point or position or territory. . . . I am, therefore, for striking, striking, and striking again till we do break them. The two armies are in fine condition . . . and I think the day of conflict is now very near. The movement which I hinted at in my last is now so far in progress that I may speak of it safely. . . . We have sent a force of near 2000 men . . . and I hope and believe that it has by this time reached the Georgia railroad system and broken it between Rome and Atlanta. When the blow has fully fallen upon the rebels I think we can safely meet them in front. Should this rear movement be successful its results can hardly be estimated. The loss of the whole force would be trifling in comparison with the advantage to us.”

In the same vein Garfield wrote to his wife: “You can hardly imagine how great consequences hang on the military operations of the next few weeks here, on the Potomac and at Vicksburg. I have hardly a thought for anything but these events.”

A few days later came the news that the raid was a failure. Streight and his force made the best time they could toward their objective, but they were steadily hunted by Forrest and finally surrendered, broken down with loss of sleep and ex-

haustion, while still ten miles from the railroad they hoped to cut. Streight laid the blame solely upon the lack of horses. "I am convinced," he wrote in his report of the raid, "that had we been furnished at Nashville with 800 good horses instead of poor, young mules, we would have been successful in spite of all other drawbacks." Streight's instructions, written by Garfield said:¹ "You will draw your supplies and keep your command well mounted from the country through which you pass." But the remounts seized on the way were too few and too inferior to equip the weary men and, above all, the raid had to pass through wild and hilly country, thinly inhabited and unable to furnish adequate supplies to such a force.

Garfield merely noted the failure in his letters and made no further comment, turning to the next problem. One would gladly know his judgment, but in this case, as in so many others through his public life, Garfield wasted no time lamenting spilled milk. It is easy to criticise the raid as a mistake and as doomed to failure. At best it was a gamble, but the fact that the commander who was sacrificed was the person who suggested it and was ready to take the risk eliminates any element of injustice. On the other hand, it was an aggressive stroke, the first movement involving an element of daring in the West. Its inspiration was clearly to be found in the long raids of Van Dorn, Forrest, Morgan, Wheeler and the rest behind the Union front, which had paralyzed Grant and Buell in 1862 and continued to harass Rosecrans in 1863. Since Rosecrans could not furnish horses owing to his scanty supply, it was necessary to start with mules and trust to getting horses from the inhabitants of Alabama and Georgia, if the expedition was to start at all.

Garfield evidently expected Rosecrans to move forward whether the raid fulfilled its object or not. On May 12 he wrote to his wife: "Our movements are greatly delayed by the slow movements of Burnside. . . . It is very trying to the patience to stand here like a wrestler tripping and making feints at his adversary and watching his movements keeping his muscles tense all the time, yet never grappling

¹ *Official Records*, Vol. XXIII, pt. i, p. 282.

and making a decisive end to the delay and struggle. Still if our people are to succeed at Richmond we had far better wait here till that work has its full effect on the rebellion."

All this time the interchanges between Rosecrans and the War Department were growing more and more acrimonious on the subject of the proper number of cavalry. Not a word of this appears in Garfield's letters, but there are constant signs of growing impatience on his part. He repeated in a letter to Austin (May 26) the ideas he had expressed to Chase: "All we need is to strike, strike and strike until the rebellion is broken. I am very anxious for this army to start and I think we shall start it in a few days, perhaps before this reaches you." Yet week after week went on while Rosecrans wrangled with the War Department with a bitterness unsurpassed in the history of the Civil War. The chief of staff was impotent to alter his commander's fixed ideas.

By this time Garfield was again becoming distressed over evil reports of home politics, especially the signs of weakening courage on the part of many friends simultaneously with the rapid growth of the violent "Copperhead" agitation carried on in Ohio by Vallandigham against the administration's war methods. What stung him to the quick was to receive reports of disaffection in his old regiment, the Forty-second. In great distress he wrote to his wife (March 14): "I am grieved and astonished at what you wrote in regard to the 42d. Indeed I cannot believe that the regiment has come to hold such absurd and wicked notions. To doubt the justice of our cause as compared with the infernal wickedness of the rebel cause is not only treason but the supremest nonsense and folly. If the dear old regiment has come to that I hope it will be publicly and perpetually disgraced before the army and the country, and the man or men who have instilled such venomous poison into it is worth an ignominious death. Nations less powerful and far less wealthy than we have waged fierce wars for 30 years continuously and still not gone to ruin. If this war takes seven years yet, I do not, cannot—would not if I could doubt in the final success of God's immutable justice and the terrible

and complete overthrow of the rebellion. I will write to the regiment if I have time."

In May the situation in Ohio came to a head in the arrest of Vallandigham on the fifth under a general order of Burnside, commanding the district. Tried by a military commission, he was sentenced to imprisonment at Fort Warren in Boston Harbor, but Lincoln interposed and commuted the sentence to turning him over to the Confederates. This was carried out, through Rosecrans's staff, May 24-25, and as Garfield frequently afterwards said he signed the order for his transmission with hearty good will.

Next and still more distressing came reports from Hinsdale that Copperheadism was appearing in the Eclectic—his own dear school! Two letters from Hinsdale and Rhodes, not preserved among Garfield's papers, seem to have brought him the information. To them Garfield replied in letters of such red-hot indignation as he seldom in his life displayed, evidently intending that his words should be read to the school. Only the letter to Hinsdale (May 26) has been preserved, but it doubtless repeated what he had already written to Rhodes. "Tell all the Copperhead students for me that were I there in charge of the school I would not only dishonorably dismiss them from the school,—but if they remained in the place and persisted in their cowardly treason, I would apply to Gen. Burnside to enforce General Order No. 38 in their cases. They entirely mistake and misapprehend the character of the times if they suppose that the same licence can now be used as in the days of peace. It is a grievous and shameful wrong to the memory of all our brave boys who are dying in front of Vicksburg and suffering everywhere for the country, to have these misguided ones at home permitted to spew out their silly treason at Hiram. They ask that if they are not permitted to speak, neither should union boys speak their views! Fools, there is a place for all such. . . . If these young traitors are in earnest, they should go to the Southern Confederacy, where they give and receive full sympathy. Tell them that I will furnish them with passes through our lines where they can join Vallandigham, and their other friends. . . . I know this is

apparently a small matter but it is only *apparently* small. We do not know what the developments of a month may bring forth and if such things be permitted at Hiram they may be elsewhere. The rebels catch up all such facts and sweet morsels of comfort and every such influence lengthens the war and adds to the bloodshed. . . . You may make whatever use of this letter you choose."

One finds scanty description of his surroundings in Garfield's letters, or of headquarters life, after the first period of all-night religious disputation. But from the letters of war correspondents who visited the Army of the Cumberland and from sundry published reminiscences one can get pictures of the shabby and comfortless life in the Tennessee winter camps, and some idea of the tide of camp gossip and jealousies. "Edmund Kirke," the war correspondent (J. A. Gilmore), in a picture of headquarters at Murfreesboro speaks of finding General Garfield "seated at a window in a corner at an unpainted pine desk,—a sort of packing box, perched on a tall stool, with pigeon holes and a turn-down lid."¹

Apparently the swirl of political smoke blew at times into the camp, for a group of Republicans, dissatisfied with Lincoln's lack of firmness and leadership, considered the possibility of using Rosecrans, the only moderately successful Union general in the spring of 1863, as a party candidate. Riddle, in his life of Garfield, published with the advantage of considerable personal information from the General, says that Garfield met the emissary, J. A. Gilmore, and argued so successfully against laying the plan before Rosecrans that the latter never even heard of the proposal.² On the other hand, Gilmore himself, in his reminiscences, represents Garfield as "greatly pleased" when the idea was suggested. "He said that if the country was canvassed from East to West so fit a man could not be found, and advised my going at once to Rosecrans and opening the subject to him in direct businesslike fashion."³ When he did so, Rosecrans refused, doubtless after consultation with his chief of

¹ J. A. Gilmore, *Personal Recollections*, p. 118.

² A. G. Riddle, *Life of James A. Garfield*, p. 69.

³ Gilmore, *Personal Recollections*, p. 146.

staff. Clearly Gilmore's narrative represents Garfield taking the only safe method in dealing with a political intriguer, that of sending him to headquarters.

Henry Villard's autobiography gives a picture quite in harmony with Riddle's story. When he visited the Army of the Cumberland in May as correspondent for the *New York Tribune*, he found Rosecrans visibly eager to make use of him to advance his political ambitions. This aroused Villard's distrust. "The more 'Old Rosy' tried to make me help in pointing him out as the great and only hope of the country the less I was inclined to gratify him and the smaller grew my faith in his fitness to command a large army and lead it to victory." But "General Garfield presented a far more commanding and attractive appearance." He "was also talkative, but more reserved and discreet than his chief. He professed to have great admiration for him and implicit faith in his military talents, but, unlike him, believed that the army was fully ready in the first half of May to enter upon a new campaign. He expressed himself freely upon the several ways of conducting operations against Bragg that suggested themselves from the relative positions of the opposed armies. He appeared to have a very clear and sound strategic judgment for one whose experience as commander had been limited to petty warfare at the head of a small brigade, with raiders and guerrillas in eastern Kentucky."¹

By June Rosecrans seemed to have made up his mind to advance, even without additional cavalry, provided he could be freed from anxiety over his communications by the proper posting of troops from Burnside's command. On June 2 Garfield wrote to his wife: "After our long delays we have at last reached the verge of a movement. Indeed the movement has begun and I confidently expect to be in the saddle by Saturday. Bragg's army has been reduced by two divisions of Infantry and two Brigades of Cavalry which have been sent to reinforce Johnston at Vicksburg. It is our purpose to go out and offer battle and if he declines it we shall drive him away from the line of Duck River and as far toward Tullahoma as we can. I expect it will be a fearful

¹ *Memoirs of Henry Villard*, Vol. II, p. 67.

struggle and a severe campaign. By the aid of the map which I sent . . . you can trace our operations pretty accurately. Study particularly the country on the Manchester Pike in the direction of Birch Grove, War Trace and Manchester. I would be glad to tell you of our plan but I dare not entrust it to the mails. . . . I ask you to pray for me and still more for the success of this army."

Even when, two days later, news came from Burnside that he had been ordered to send 8,000 men to reinforce Grant at Vicksburg, Garfield still hoped. He wrote (June 6): "We have had a series of brisk skirmishes during the past three days and should have gone out with the whole army but for some delay caused by Burnside's change of plan in sending an army corps away to Grant. . . . The movement which I told you of in my last, began four days ago by withdrawing the mass of our force from Franklin, and bringing up several detachments from posts in the rear. . . . We do not want to begin a general movement on Sunday and so I think we shall have no more fighting before Monday next. While it is quite impossible in so large an army as this to say precisely when any general movement will be made, nothing peculiar preventing, I think the army will move at that time."

Another letter of June 7, 1863, to Captain Plumb shows his feelings at this juncture. "I hope you will hear before this reaches you that this army is in motion. I am exceedingly anxious that we shall take the golden moment when some of Bragg's forces are absent to aid Vicksburg, and throw the weight of this army against him and if possible crush him. The success of Grant in his Mississippi campaign has been most cheering. If he takes Vicksburg it will change the aspect of the whole war."

But Rosecrans's next step cast him into profound chagrin, for on June 8 the commanding general addressed a circular letter to his corps and division commanders requesting their opinion on the advisability of an advance, taking particular note of the administration's solicitude lest Bragg send reinforcements to operate with Johnston for the relief of Vicksburg. With unhesitating promptness all sent written replies

opposing any advance.¹ Rosecrans's motive in taking this step seems to have been to secure the support of his general officers in resisting the pressure from Washington. Villard, who was present at Murfreesboro, representing the *New York Tribune*, says in his reminiscences that Rosecrans did it as "an indirect mode of evading the command from Washington" and that having "obtained" an endorsement of his opposition to an advance "he triumphantly telegraphed to General Halleck."² General J. D. Cox observes of the replies obtained from the seventeen generals: "In reading the responses the impression grows that there was what may be called a popular feeling among these officers that their duty was to back up their commanding general in a judgment of his on the subjects submitted, which could hardly be other than well known."³ At all events Rosecrans hastened to use the new ammunition and on June 11 notified Halleck of the results of the questionnaire.⁴ "No one thinks an advance advisable until Vicksburg's fate is determined. Admitting these officers to have a reasonable share of military sagacity . . . you perceive that there are graver and stronger reasons than probably appear at Washington for the attitude of this army. I therefore counsel patience. . . . Better wait a little to get all ready to insure the best results."

The effect produced upon Garfield by this manœuvre was shown in a letter of the same day (June 11) to Rhodes: "A sense of disappointment and mortification almost akin to shame has kept me from answering any letters for some time. I have delayed answering yours in hopes of having something decisive to say. I have written a number of letters within the past fortnight in which I have said 'Before this reaches you I hope you will hear that this army has moved upon the enemy.' I have made my personal preparations, said my good-byes to absent friends by letter, commended my cause and myself to God and nerved myself up for the shock, intending to send a few words of parting to you all

¹ *Official Records*, Vol. XXIII, pt. ii, pp. 402-405.

² *Memoirs of Henry Villard*, Vol. II, p. 70.

³ Cox, *Military Reminiscences*, Vol. I, p. 480.

⁴ *Official Records*, Vol. XXIII, pt. i, p. 8.

after my horses were saddled and the great columns were in motion. Now I write to tell you that I have given up all hope of either fighting or dying *at present*. I had drafted a plan of campaign, drawn the first rough draft of the orders for movement, fixed the time of departure, arrival and attack, entered minutely into all the details and submitted the document to Gen. R who had approved it and all things seemed ready.

“But there have been most strange and unexpected interferences. The chess-board is indeed muddled and no man sees through it. Just on the eve of our movement, there seemed to fall down upon the leading officers of this army as sudden as a bolt from the blue, a most determined and decided opinion that there ought to be no immediate early advance. Officers who to my certain knowledge were restless and impatient for a forward movement, became suddenly conservative and cautious and think masterly inactivity the chiefest of military virtues. . . . I will not repeat the many reasons assigned why and how not to do it. The most weight I give to all this is the conclusion that it may be best to wait a short time to see the developments at Vicksburg.—All these reasons will be, to my mind, totally insufficient to balance the reasons why we should strike. So be at rest about this army and be contented to hear that we are picking up a ragged rebel now and then.”

This negative decision of Rosecrans brought down upon him a series of severely critical letters from Halleck and Stanton, the former of whom told him plainly that the opinion of the Administration and of the country demanded action, and would not tolerate such an inactive policy much longer. To these Rosecrans replied with stubborn independence. But whatever his chief thought, Garfield refused to let this passive attitude of mind among the general officers stand without formal protest. In fact, the continued inaction of the army he had joined in hope of finding “more life,” was driving him into a depression comparable to that under which he had suffered a year before. Apologizing to his wife for the brevity of his recent letters he said (June 14): “Besides being intensely busy I will say that I have been so distressed

at the long delay of this army to move, and the unreasonable way in which some treat the whole matter, that I could hardly write to any one, more than to utter my disgust. I have for several days past been diligently at work collecting all the facts I could of the strength of the rebel army in our front and comparing it with our own. I have just completed a carefully written paper which I shall this evening present to the General. I argue the state of the case and urge an immediate advance upon Bragg. I don't know what the result will be. I know the General desires to move, but it is hard to go with so many unwilling men in high places."

The report, printed in Garfield's *Works*¹ represents his first official independent utterance as chief of staff and, taken with the letters quoted above, indicates the scope of his position. He began by an analysis of the opinions of the generals, showing, without comment, the purely negative and defensive character of the arguments advanced. Then he turned to an estimate of the relative strength of the two armies, reciting his evidence and coming to a conclusion that it would be possible to send an effective force of 65,217 against Bragg's 41,680.²

Having thus established a large Union superiority in numbers, he went on to lay before Rosecrans the considerations which pointed toward an immediate advance. First he dwelt upon the fact that Bragg's army was at its minimum while theirs was at its maximum, and, as he said, "viewing the question in the light of human calculation, I refuse to entertain a doubt that this army, which in January last defeated Bragg's superior numbers, can overwhelm his present greatly inferior numbers." Next he emphasized the economic advantages to be gained—"the rich and abundant harvest of Tenn."—and the possibility of a severe blow to the enemy's morale, while minimizing the difficulties to be

¹ B. A. Hinsdale, ed., *Works of James A. Garfield*, Vol. I, app., and *Official Records*, Vol. XXIII, pt. ii, p. 420.

² It is interesting to observe, in passing, that the official figures printed in the *Official Records*, if reduced to the standard of "effectives," stand at 65,594 to 42,790; a striking confirmation of the accuracy of his judgment.

incurred through lengthening the lines of communications. Finally he urged the political necessity for an immediate aggressive step. "The government and the War department believe," he said, "that this army ought to move upon the enemy. The army desires it and the country is anxiously hoping for it."

Garfield's biographer and friend, Reid, called this "the ablest military document known to have been submitted by a chief of staff to his superior during the war," and while one is not called upon to agree with such an extreme claim, it cannot be denied that it showed soundness of judgment, modesty and courage. When it is considered that he was setting his opinion—that of a man who had been a school teacher and preacher two years before—against that of professional soldiers, including such men as Thomas, Sheridan, Granger, his boldness is undeniable. "It must be admitted," comments J. D. Cox,¹ "to be a remarkable production for a young volunteer officer deliberately controverting the opinions of such an array of seniors."

Under the pressure from the War Department, reinforced by the arguments of his chief of staff, Rosecrans slowly came to the decision to act. "I am having a great deal of anxiety about our affairs," Garfield wrote home (June 21), "but hope we shall see our way through before long." "After . . . a full canvassing of the situation an advance was agreed upon," wrote Garfield at a later time to Chase (July 27, 1863), "but it was delayed through days which seemed months to me." It was not until June 22 that Garfield began a fragmentary journal with these words "Drafted plan of campaign. To be a grand movement *en echelon* beginning on the right as a feint while it is the main purpose to throw the weight of our army upon Manchester and thence to Tullahoma before Bragg can get there." Thus the long waiting was at an end. Garfield's share in bringing this about cannot of course be determined, but in the army his letter to Rosecrans seems at the time to have stirred some feeling. General Wood, his former division commander, addressed to him an elaborate rejoinder protesting "with a deep sense of the

¹ Cox, *Military Reminiscences*, Vol. I, p. 483.

awful responsibility which rests on those of us who have the lives of so many fellow-men in our keeping,"¹ and General Crittenden is reported by Reid as saying to Garfield: "It is understood by the General officers of the army that the movement is your work. I wish you to understand that it is a rash and fatal move for which you will be held responsible."²

As summarized in Garfield's diary, the campaign which followed was a flanking operation which depended for success upon its speed, unless the Confederates were to evade encirclement by retreating. Briefly summed up, the movement called for the sending of Granger's corps against the Confederate center while the other three corps—those of Thomas, Crittenden and McCook—marched eastward and then southward over a series of ranges of hills and across several streams which would have been good defensive positions. On June 24 Garfield wrote to his wife: "The whole army is in motion. Headquarters move at 1 p.m.," and by the time he next wrote, June 27, the Union army was well forward on its swing. "We have driven the enemy back upon Fairfield and our advance is now close upon Manchester.

. . . The rebs are not disposed to give us a general battle this side Duck River. We shall push for Tullahoma and try to get in their rear. If we succeed we shall then test the metal of both armies. . . . I am well but I get but little sleep. It has rained fearfully and almost constantly since we started." By June 29 he wrote again from Manchester: "We reached this place Saturday evening, captured a small force of rebels that were there and found the mass of their army in full retreat toward Tullahoma. Yesterday we threw forward our extreme right and seized Shelbyville, taking 400 to 500 prisoners and a battery. Yesterday we brought up our trains and now we are preparing for an immediate advance on Tullahoma. If the rebels stand we shall give them the biggest fight we are able. We somewhat expect they will retreat beyond the Tennessee River but hope not. If they stand I think we shall be able to damage them materially. Our operations thus far have been successful beyond the

¹ *Official Records*, Vol. XXIII, pt. ii, p. 434.

² Reid, *Ohio in the War*, Vol. I, p. 756.

expectations of everyone outside headquarters. I have studied all these movements carefully beforehand and I am delighted to see how fully my judgment has been vindicated."

The hope of coming in on the flank and rear of Bragg's army was disappointed. When the Union corps closed in on Tullahoma it was found that Bragg had retreated to the southward. At first a general pursuit was planned, but by July 4 it was evident that Bragg had no intention of making any stand and was leaving Tennessee as fast as possible. The Union troops were accordingly halted or allowed to follow at a more leisurely pace after the retreating Confederates who, falling back along the railroad, crossed the Tennessee River and were out of danger.

Garfield's judgment on the campaign is found in two letters he wrote at about this time. To his wife he said (July 8): "I am glad to tell you that I am well and safely through the campaign which is ended. The rebels are now wholly driven from middle Tennessee. They crossed the Tennessee River at Bridgeport and burned the long bridge behind them.

. . . The rebels were completely outgeneralled, for while we were far on the way to Manchester, they were defending Fairfield and the gaps. They retreated in confusion across the Duck River and gave up their first two lines. Tullahoma had then only a small garrison and we could have got in ahead of Bragg as our plan was, but for the extraordinary rains which rendered the roads almost impassible. I have never seen so much rain fall in the same length of time. If we had reached Tullahoma before Bragg we should have destroyed his army. . . . We have not lost over 1000 killed and wounded and have killed and wounded over 1500 rebels and have over 1000 prisoners. His Tennessee troops have deserted in great numbers and it will be difficult for him to repair his losses of war material. Again the rich harvest of Middle Tennessee were ready to be gathered and he has lost that. The news of the fall of Vicksburg and our successes in the East are most cheering and lead me to hope we may soon see signs of light for our poor country. No man will hail the return of peace more joyfully than I. Still, there is much

hard fighting to be done yet. . . . We are restoring burned bridges and bringing up supplies preparatory to pushing forward upon a new campaign. Our hands and heads are very full of work."

To Chase, on July 27, he added this comment: "The wisdom of the movement was not only vindicated, but the seventeen dissenting generals were compelled to confess that if the movement had been made ten days earlier, while the weather was propitious, the army of Bragg would, in all human probability, no longer exist. I shall never cease to regret the sad delay which lost us so great an opportunity to inflict a mortal blow upon the centre of the Rebellion."¹ Garfield had said, in his appeal to Rosecrans, that, granting all the minor advantages to be gained by driving Bragg out of Tennessee, "our true objective is the Rebel army." Judged by that criterion, the Tullahoma campaign failed in its object and Garfield's letter to Chase shows that he so viewed it. But taken as an example of the handling of an army and of the technique of a flanking operation it has been given high praise. J. D. Cox, by no means given to superlatives, says "it is reckoned one of his [Rosecrans's] chief claims to military renown."²

Rosecrans himself seemed wholly satisfied with his achievement and paid his chief of staff a compliment whose wording clearly refers to Garfield's share in framing the plan. "All my staff merited my warm approbation," he wrote, in his official report of July 24, "for ability, zeal and devotion to duty; but I am sure they will not consider it invidious if I especially mention Brigadier General Garfield, ever active, prudent and sagacious. I feel indebted to him for both counsel and assistance in the administration of this army. He possesses the instincts and energy of a great commander."³

Well might General Garfield, not yet thirty-two years old, feel contented with his status in the army when his commanding general uttered such words. He was apparently making of the position of chief of staff what he had in mind

¹ Hinsdale, ed., *Works of James A. Garfield*, Vol. I, p. 773.

² Cox, *Military Reminiscences*, Vol. I, p. 484.

³ *Official Records*, Vol. XXIII, pt. i, p. 40.

when he accepted it, an "*alter ego*" for the commander, a genuine contributor to the guidance of his military policy and to the administration of the army. A writer who published a description of the Army of the Cumberland at this time—the preface is dated July, 1863—says of Garfield: "Possessed of sound natural sense, an excellent judgment, a highly cultivated intellect and the deserved reputation of a successful military leader, he is not only the mentor of the Staff but his opinions are sought and his counsels heeded by many who are older and not less distinguished than himself."¹

There was an element of irony in the situation when it is recalled that the young man who had shrunk with such distaste from the West Pointers in the spring of 1862 and had developed while at Washington the most unbounded suspicions of their efficiency and their loyalty, was the intimate associate of a West Pointer and dealt chiefly with corps and division commanders who were themselves West Pointers. In fact, his own former superior, General Wood, whose professional attitude toward war had shocked him in April, 1862, was among his constant associates. The effect of this intercourse seems to have been to obliterate Garfield's earlier prejudice. There is no recantation found among his letters, simply the utter disappearance of the language and thoughts of 1862. In later life the regular army men had no firmer friend and no more loyal protector in Congress than Garfield, and on more than one occasion he spoke of the indispensable services rendered by them to the nation in the war. It was, in fact, the inevitable result of Garfield's holding such a position as that of chief of staff, where the vital necessity of soldierly training in corps and division commanders made itself daily manifest. Without imbibing in the remotest degree the professional military point of view, Garfield evidently had come to understand it and appreciate its value.

To have felt otherwise would have made his position absolutely untenable, for against no individual is jealousy and suspicion more likely to develop than against a chief of staff

¹ J. Fitch, *Annals of the Army of the Cumberland*, p. 46.

whose relations with the commander are such as to give him an unequalled opportunity for personal influence. There is evidence that Garfield did not wholly escape this. One traces signs of a certain malice in General J. Beatty's amusing book, *The Citizen Soldier*. When, shortly after his appointment, Garfield was called to present Buchanan Reid, the poet, to a camp company, Beatty remarked:¹ "General Garfield introduced Mr. Reid by a short speech, not delivered in his usual happy style. I was impressed with the idea all the time that he had too many buttons on his coat—he certainly had a great many buttons—and the splendor of the double row possibly detracted somewhat from the splendor of his remarks." Two generals in their reminiscences show clear signs of dislike, Sheridan,² who was a division commander, and Stanley, who commanded the cavalry. There is nothing in the contemporary correspondence of these two men with Garfield to indicate any hostility—in fact, quite the reverse. In one of his letters (June 21, 1863) Garfield sent home "a photograph of my friend General Stanley, our chief of cavalry. He is an able and a gallant officer." Quite possibly events after the war may have tinged their views, but in the memoirs of General Stanley we have a lurid picture of the chief of staff as intriguer, busybody, politician, and military incompetent which evidently reflects war memories as seen through a bilious recollection.³

It is never worth while to take reminiscences very seriously, especially those which blast the fame of nearly every one referred to, but it is interesting that the acrid Stanley and the admiring Mason, author of the regimental history, agree in ascribing to Garfield a powerful influence over Rosecrans. "His influence over Rosecrans had by this time become almost supreme," says Mason. "His clear and comprehensive mind grasped every detail and his opinions were invariably consulted on all important questions. He wrote many orders upon his own judgment submitting them to

¹ J. Beatty, *The Citizen Soldier*, p. 225.

² P. H. Sheridan, *Personal Memoirs*, Vol. I, pp. 200-201.

³ Stanley, "Personal Memoirs," in *Military Historian and Economist*, 1917.

Rosecrans for approval or alteration."¹ Stanley's method of saying the same thing was that "Garfield's blarney and deceitful tongue captured Rosecrans."² That Garfield was conscious of exercising a strong influence appears in a letter to Chase and also one to Fuller (May 4), "Gen. Rosecrans shares all his counsels with me and places a large share of the responsibility of the management of the army upon me, even more than I sometimes wish he did."

Whatever influence Garfield may have possessed with his commander, he certainly had none on the one point he considered vital, namely, in securing continuous aggressive action. After the end of the Tullahoma campaign Rosecrans settled down to a deliberate and methodical organization of the railroads, the supplies and the army before undertaking any further advance. On July 17 Garfield wrote from Nashville to his wife: "The General and I are on a tour of inspection preparatory to an advance upon Chattanooga which will be made as soon as our R.R. is repaired and supplies can be sent forward. . . . We have a great work on hand to visit all hospitals, forts, troops and Q.M. and commissary departments. We shall also make out the official report of our late campaign before we leave this place which will be probably in three days hence." But days passed and lengthened into weeks; the railroad was opened and supplies sent through, but still Rosecrans delayed until he should be personally satisfied that everything was ready. On July 27 Garfield's rising distress found an outlet in a confidential letter to Chase, in which he laid before him his profound depression over Rosecrans's lack of aggressiveness. "I cannot conceal from you the fact that I have been greatly tried and dissatisfied with the slow progress that we have made in this department since the battle of Stone River. . . . For many weeks prior to our late movement I could not but feel that there was not that live and earnest determination to fling the great weight of this army into the scale and make its power felt in crushing the shell of the rebellion.

¹ Mason, *Forty-Second Ohio Infantry*, p. 17.

² Stanley, "Personal Memoirs," in *Military Historian and Economist*, 1917, p. 158.

I have no words to tell you with how restive and unsatisfied a spirit I waited and pleaded for striking a sturdy blow." He then described the part he played in pushing the Tullahoma campaign in words already cited and continued: "The work of expelling Bragg from Middle Tennessee occupied nine days and ended July 3d, leaving his troops in a most disheartened condition, while our army with a loss of less than one thousand men was in a few days fuller of potential fight than ever before. On the 18th the bridges were rebuilt and the cars were in full communication from the Cumberland to the Tennessee. I have since then urged, with all the earnestness that I possess, a rapid advance while Bragg's army was shattered and under cover and before Johnston and he could effect a junction. Thus far the General has been singularly disinclined to grasp the situation with a strong hand and make the advantage his own.

"I write this with more sorrow than I can tell you, for I love every bone in his body and next to my desire to see the Rebellion blasted is my anxiety to see him blessed. But even the breadth of my love is not sufficient to cover this almost fatal delay. My personal relations with General Rosecrans are all that I could desire. Officially I share his counsels and responsibilities even more than I desire; but I beg you to know that this delay is against my judgment and my every wish. . . . If this inaction continues I shall ask to be relieved. . . . But I do hope that you will soon hear that this splendid army is at least trying to do its part in the great work. If the war department has not always been just, it has certainly been very indulgent to this army. But I feel that the time has come when it should allow no plea to keep this army back from the most vigorous activity."¹

In writing this letter Garfield's distress of mind drove him into the only act of his entire career which has been criticised as underhanded, for by it he admitted the shortcomings of his commander, with whom he stood in intimate relations, and sought to dissociate himself, in the eyes of Chase, from any share in the responsibility. Printed after Garfield's death, this letter has been made the basis of extravagant

¹ Hinsdale, ed., *Works of James A. Garfield*, Vol. I, p. 772.

charges by sundry writers with an animus unfriendly to Garfield's reputation. It is styled an act of the basest treachery, an "infamy" and the like, and its significance distorted into proposterous forms. General D. S. Stanley, for instance, draws the picture of the chief of staff "sitting complacently, cheerily at Rosecrans' table whilst writing daily letters to cut his throat."¹ Another writer, on the basis of this one letter, concocts an elaborate theory of a plan on Garfield's part to cause Rosecrans's removal in order to further his own military ambitions.²

To anyone who has followed Garfield's career and realized the special relation in which he stood to Chase, his friend, host and benefactor of the preceding autumn; his deep belief that Chase was the one strong man in the administration; his confidence in Chase's judgment, integrity and discretion, it is easy to understand his action. He had exhausted his powers of persuasion and argument, and turned in his depression to the one quarter where he could hope for comfort and for aid. The letter is primarily a cry of distress to a friend and sympathizer whom he wanted to have know the truth as to his own feelings. Garfield's one desire was for the success of the Union arms, for the crushing of the rebellion; all his hopes and plans with Chase in the autumn of 1862 had looked forward to stern, daring, aggressive action, and now they all seemed to have failed.

Garfield told Chase nothing about Rosecrans that was not abundantly known at Washington. He violated no confidences. And his positive purpose could only be to instigate Chase to spur the War Department into applying more drastic pressure to Rosecrans. No other interpretation can be placed on the words last quoted. And so far from writing "daily letters" to Chase criticising Rosecrans, this appears to have been the only letter of the kind he ever wrote. Garfield felt that he could say to Chase what he could not to any other man. In what he felt to be a grave crisis he turned

¹ Stanley, "Personal Memoirs," in *Military Historian and Economist*, 1917, p. 131.

² Piatt, *Life of Gen. Geo. H. Thomas*, p. 331.

to the one person who could help. He wished to force Rosecrans into taking the right course. This is his defense against the charge of disloyalty.

In his *Military Reminiscences* (1900, Vol. II, p. 16) General J. D. Cox adds another consideration, after pointing out that what Garfield merely commented on were the public acts of his chief. "Garfield was also at that time a member of Congress, having duties to the President, the cabinet and his colleagues. . . . Rosecrans not only knew this but was supposed by many to have invited Garfield to take the staff appointment partly by reason of this. Under all the circumstances, therefore, the ground of complaint becomes shadowy and disappears."

It should also be borne in mind that there is no sign nor likelihood that the letter produced any effect at Washington, for, several days before it was received, Halleck (July 26) had warned Rosecrans "as a friend" that the "patience of the authorities here has been completely exhausted" and that he would be removed unless he advanced. This producing no results, Halleck, on August 4, sent a peremptory order to Burnside and to Rosecrans to begin their respective campaigns against Knoxville and Chattanooga "at once." Even after this Rosecrans delayed, while perfecting details, for nearly two weeks more.

During this time Garfield's depression reached its lowest point. On August 1 he wrote to his wife from Murfreesboro that he was "over crowded with business. . . . We staid at Nashville much longer than we at first intended to. We did not come back here till the 29th July. We are busy again preparing for another advance and I earnestly hope it will be begun soon. I don't feel at all satisfied with the slow progress we are making and I expect to hear complaints and just ones soon. There are the strongest possible reasons for using every moment now before the rebels can recover from their late disasters." A few days later, while Rosecrans still delayed, Garfield was taken violently ill and lay sick and unhappy at headquarters. On August 11 he wrote to Rhodes, apologizing for not having written, explaining that he had had camp fever and was just sitting up, "too weak to do

more than acknowledge your letter. I can't tell you how disgusted I am with our slow movements."

While lying sick Garfield found vent for his feelings in composing a letter intended for use in the Ohio political campaign, to offset Vallandigham's charges of peace sentiment in the Army of the Cumberland. The "Copperhead" movement was now at its height in the Ohio valley states, and the fear lest Ohio should be carried by the Democrats rested upon Garfield, as upon the Washington administration, like a crushing weight. When he had finished it on the seventeenth he wrote to Captain Plumb, transmitting the document, as follows: "Since I have been lying on my bed I have from day to day dictated a few lines in response to some of Vallandigham's terrible lies in his Niagara Falls letter. I have had some means of knowing how false and malicious his statements are, and I have felt it due to the people of Ohio that they should know it. I enclose you the manuscript I have prepared which you are at liberty to give to the press, or to the Union Central Committee for publication as you think best. I cannot tell whether such a paper is worth while. Destroy it or publish it as your judgment dictates. If published my name may go with it." In a later letter he added, relative to Vallandigham's statements on the morale of the army (September 3), "I had visited Shelbyville and learned that he had conversed with people on the whole subject of the war, and I obtained ample proof of the utter falsehood of his statements in the letter referred to."

The manuscript was given to the press and some of its sentences may well be quoted to illustrate the tension under which it was written. Vallandigham had claimed that the South was stronger than ever, could not be crushed and the army knew it. Garfield wrote in reply: "He could hardly have failed to notice that nearly the whole available force of the confederacy was already in the field, that barely enough citizens were left at home to oversee the slaves and manage the plantations: that the Confederacy was a shell which, though made of iron, when once pierced must collapse into ruin. . . . I answer his craven words of despair by the stout facts of July under which the whole rebel framework

is reeling and tottering to its fall. . . . Let all true men take new heart and new hope. Let the Republic but once more display the majesty of its strength and the work will be ended."

By the day that this letter was sent, the end of Garfield's waiting had arrived, for after more than a month's delay Rosecrans, having organized his communications and amassed his supplies to his satisfaction, was ready to act. On the sixteenth of August orders were issued for a general advance, and the movement known to history as the Chickamauga campaign was begun.

CHAPTER X
CHICKAMAUGA

1863

THE movement against Bragg's army which Rosecrans finally began on August 15 marked the culmination of Garfield's military career, for in it were put to the proof the results of his organizing activity ever since February, 1863, and his own personal capacity as chief of staff under the searching test of aggressive campaigning in a difficult country. If he were to carry out his plan of entering Congress in December, this campaign would undoubtedly be the last one in his record and must crown it with either success or failure. He entered upon it, accordingly, under a profound emotional tension.

Although for the first ten days all the orders from headquarters were sent out signed by Colonel Goddard, the adjutant general, there can be no doubt that Garfield, sick as he was, played an active part in planning and organizing the operations. An important letter to his wife, written August 23, after the movements of the several corps were well under way, clearly indicated not only his personal feelings but his clear sense of a deep personal responsibility for the outcome of the pending strategical combinations. "Stevenson, Alabama. Aug. 23. By having my cot taken into the car I came through from Winchester to this place on the 18th without injury. Capt. Swaim found a quiet room for me apart from the camp . . . and I have been gaining slowly and steadily. I now sit up two or three hours at a time. . . . You came near having me at home in the midst of your house-building troubles and nothing but my will and the great work before this army in which the Gen. says he don't know how to spare me kept you and the *little coger* from seeing me. We are now on the bank of the Tennessee with the army and I hope to see and help direct the crossing from my ambulance if not

from Harry's back before this week is past. There is so much of myself in this campaign that I must help realize my ideas. It looks now as though we should have a bloody crossing but we may not. It is the greatest undertaking of the kind during this war. The river is from 500 to 900 yards wide and pretty deep—averaging ten feet. I appreciate what you say in regard to my work in this army. I believe my army life has been as free from self seeking and pride as any part of my whole life. I am doing a work here for which I shall never get a tithe of the credit that others will. Let it pass. I am glad to help save the country."

This makes it evident that even on his sick bed Garfield had coöperated with General Rosecrans and had contributed his ideas and his knowledge to the campaign. Of course it should again be repeated that he had done no more than was expected of a competent chief of staff. There is no sign that he overvalued his services, or that he considered the campaign as in any sense his own rather than Rosecrans's; but the closing paragraphs of the letter are a clear indication that he was conscious of no inconsiderable influence and responsibility, and that his activity as chief of staff in furthering the execution of the plans had the added zest coming from carrying out manœuvres which in large part he himself had planned.

The general character of the strategy developed was similar to that used in the Tullahoma campaign two months earlier. While part of Crittenden's corps made noisy demonstrations in front of Chattanooga and seemed to threaten crossing the Tennessee above the city, the rest of the army was sent over the river near Bridgeport, twenty miles to the southwest, and then directed in a wide flanking march eastward and northeastward. Since Rosecrans had some 80,000 under his command, to which Bragg could oppose less than half as many, the crossing of the river was an easy matter; and although the Confederate position at Chattanooga was easily defended against odds from the west, it could be flanked from the south.

Three days after writing the letter quoted, Garfield's health was so much restored that he resumed full charge of

writing dispatches, and his characteristic phraseology was at once apparent in the orders, questions and suggestions sent out hourly from headquarters. It was a time of the most concentrated activity. On September 1 Garfield wrote again from Stevenson to his wife, who had urged him to return and build up his health: "I would dearly love to go home and spend the remaining weeks between now and the time of my departure for Washington (in case I go) with you. . . . But I know you will appreciate the situation of affairs when I tell you that all the fruits of the past operations of this army since I opened its first gun and won its first victory at Middle Creek [are] now about to be crowned or lost in a great and trying campaign beyond the mountains on the soil of Georgia. It is not vanity for me to say that no man in this army can fill my place during this movement. It would take him several months to learn the character and condition of affairs as I know them and to hold that influence with the commanding General that I do. For these reasons I believe I can more ably serve the country during this campaign than ever before in my life and anything short of breaking down my constitution and destroying my capacity altogether I feel like doing to help carry out our plans. I am glad to tell you that I am much better and have now been on duty for nearly a week and though I have lost much flesh and strength I am regaining it slowly and hope to get through the season without another breakdown.

"Our second bridge across the Tennessee will be finished today and I hope we shall not long delay on this shore. A good part of our army is already across but a rumor [came] last night that Bragg was crossing the river above Chattanooga and attempting to come in on our rear and cut our railroad. We must delay our movement till we ascertain the truth of this rumor. If it be true we will turn back and fight him on this side. If not we will try to find him beyond the mountains."

On the third of September he wrote again, to Captain Plumb: "I am much better now and am hard at work again. We are just on the eve of a great movement which must have marked results one way or the other. I issued the orders last

night, and this morning the whole army is in motion. More than half of it has already crossed the Tennessee and [is] pushing across the mountains to the R.R. between Dalton and Atlanta. It is a question of anxious solicitude whether Bragg will fall back upon Atlanta, or Northward into East Tennessee, attempt to move around our left flank into Middle Tennessee and Ky. as he did last summer,—or fight us. We shall know before this reaches you. If I live through this campaign I now think I shall go to Congress. I am inclined to believe there will be work of great importance before that body, and if our campaign and that of the other armies are successful, the work of fighting will be substantially ended.”

The emptiness of the rumor of a Confederate advance was quickly manifest, the rest of the army crossed and by September 6 the advance across the hills to the eastward was in full progress. Headquarters was now moved across the river, following the army, and on September 6 from Cave Spring, Alabama, Garfield sent the following letter, showing his eager and hopeful state of mind: “We are all across the river and are closing in on the rebel army at Chattanooga. They must fight us or run before many days. The situation is one of intense interest and great results may hang upon the issue. . . . We are on the edge of great events. Harry is saddled and we leave for Trenton, Georgia, in a few minutes. Excuse this pencilled note, I can do no better.”

While two corps of the Union army, advancing from the southwestward, climbed over ranges of low rough mountains, the third under Crittenden moved directly toward Chattanooga. On September 9 it was discovered that the Confederate army had evacuated the city and was withdrawing to the eastward, probably because with the numbers at his disposal Bragg could not prevent himself from being outflanked from the south; and this news led Rosecrans to decide on a continuation of his divergent advance instead of a concentration of his army. Two months earlier when Bragg, at Tullahoma, found the superior Union army threatening his communications, he had withdrawn along the railway and now, in Rosecrans’s judgment, he appeared to be following the same course. Accordingly on September 9 the

Union commander ordered a "general pursuit," each corps following an independent route to the eastward, Crittenden along the railway from Chattanooga, Thomas across Lookout Mountain and thence over Pigeon Mountain toward Lafayette; McCook still further southward over the same ridge of Lookout toward the small town of Alpine.

Evidently Rosecrans thought that what Bragg had done once he would do again and acted on that theory. For this he has been generally criticised. General W. F. Smith¹ says of his advance that it was not "a legitimate campaign conducted on proper military principles. . . . He should have had his army well in hand, until he knew the whereabouts and purpose of his enemy." It becomes interesting at this point to conjecture the extent to which Garfield, as chief of staff, shared the responsibility for this movement—a point on which there is no direct evidence. The probabilities are that the two talked things over, and that Garfield, in receiving and transmitting reports of advanced guards and patrols, used his best intelligence to draw correct inferences. That he was responsible for Rosecrans's adventurous decision it is too much to assume, but that he heartily sympathized with it and embodied his own aggressive spirit in his dispatches may be conjectured with some show of probability. The man who tried elaborate flanking marches with divided forces in his first and only independent campaign—in the Sandy valley—would welcome such a chance for bold strategy, if one may argue from analogy. Certainly the language of all Garfield's dispatches from headquarters during September 9-12 breathes the greatest confidence and eagerness for "pursuit."

The corps of Crittenden and of McCook advanced unopposed and by September 12 had virtually reached their respective destinations. Neither had met any Confederates other than a few patrols and cavalry scouts. But Thomas's corps kept encountering blockaded roads and squads of pickets and on September 11 Negley's division, which was in the lead, was suddenly attacked sharply by superior numbers and driven back on the rest of the column at the base

¹ *Mil. Hist. Soc. Mass.*, Vol. VIII, p. 152-154.

of Lookout Mountain. By the late afternoon of that day Rosecrans realized that instead of withdrawing eastward along the railroad, Bragg had marched southward from Chattanooga behind the next ridge of hills and the whole Confederate army was posted somewhere near Thomas's single corps. The situation was not at all what Rosecrans had imagined, a "general pursuit." The Union army was divided into three groups, spread over fifty miles of hilly wooded country and connected only by rough country roads; and the Confederate army was so placed that if Bragg was ready to risk an offensive he might deal a heavy blow to either of them. Prompt and decisive action was demanded of the Union commander and his chief of staff.

Rosecrans later said, in his official report, that the uniting of the three corps was "a matter of life and death," but no such idea appears in any of the dispatches that Garfield wrote ordering a concentration. His purpose was still aggressive. To Crittenden he wrote,¹ "Be ready to attack the enemy with the utmost vigor," and to Thomas,² "Of course it is our policy to attack [the enemy] as soon as we know his position and force." In summoning Granger to Chattanooga, with the reserve, he wrote, "We are concentrating the army to support General Thomas and fight a general battle."³ But that Garfield saw the dangers in their situation is shown by a letter he sent to Rhodes (September 13): "I am leaving for the centre of the army 30 miles from here in Georgia. A battle is imminent. I believe the enemy intends now to fight us. He has a large force and the advantage of position. Unless we can outmanœuvre him we shall be in a perilous situation. Our strategic success has been most brilliant thus far."

Headquarters was now moved to a spot near Thomas's position at Stevens Gap, for upon Thomas's corps as the center the concentration must take place. Crittenden's forces were soon in touch, on September 14, but McCook's corps did not reach the desired position until September

¹ *Official Records*, Vol. XXX, pt. iii, p. 546.

² *Ibid.*, p. 540.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 586.

17. This long delay was due to the fact that McCook preferred to retrace his entire march over the Lookout range and join Thomas by following his line of advance, rather than risk moving directly northward from Alpine to Stevens Gap. Until the three corps were united it was an anxious time, for if Bragg chose to take the offensive he would have a better chance of success than he could hope to get later. But no serious movement came from the Confederates, who seemed to be willing to leave the initiative wholly to Rosecrans. By the morning of the sixteenth it was clear that the concentration was going to be successfully achieved and any danger from a Confederate attack seemed to be at an end. Meanwhile Rosecrans had applied for additional forces, in view of reported Confederate reinforcements, and Garfield thought that until these arrived it was not likely that a battle would take place. The initiative he regarded as once more in Rosecrans's possession, as shown by a letter he wrote (September 16) from Crawfish Spring.

"I received yours of Sept. 4th just before I left Chattanooga. Since then we have been thirty miles along the crest of Lookout Mountain and concentrated the three columns of the army so as to be able to use its power on one point either for offense or defense as may be necessary. That done we have moved eastward and northward and ordered our tents and wagons forward to join us. Six miles and the slender range of Pigeon Mountain now separate us from the rebel army. Whether they will fight us or will run again is not yet certain, but they have been heavily reinforced from the Mississippi army and perhaps some from Virginia and are better able to fight us now with some chance of success than they have been before for a long time. We are expecting Burnside to close down on us in a few days and then I think we shall give the rebs a chance. I think you can find our position on the map I sent. La Fayette is the center of the rebel position with the circumference resting along the crest of Pigeon Mountain. Our army has the line of West Chickamauga Creek northwest of La Fayette, half of our line with its back against Lookout Mountain. The situation

is one of great interest and great results are dependent on the outcome of the contest or retreat which must occur soon.

“My health is improving as we advance. . . . I think I shall get through the campaign without a broken constitution, though I think the war will have shortened my life a few years,—if not more than a few. . . . Just at this point a telegram has been received from Washington confirming the rumors we have heard that Longstreet has reinforced Bragg with three divisions from Lee’s army and that Sherman and Hurlbut have been ordered to the Tennessee river. This being so, the day of the struggle will probably be deferred but it will be great when it comes. Thank God that the forces are concentrating on both sides for a final struggle. It will, I believe, be the finishing great blow.”

The expectations of further delay shown in Garfield’s letter were not fulfilled, for on that same day, as the Union army was completing its concentration and preparing to move northward to get nearer Chattanooga, reports of Confederate activity increased so greatly as to indicate that Bragg had suddenly taken the offensive and intended to seek battle. His quiescence, it later appeared, had been due to the necessity of awaiting reinforcements and so soon as these were on hand in sufficient number, even before the Virginia troops had arrived, he prepared to strike. The situation accordingly assumed a new phase, that of manœuvring for position before battle, and Garfield’s dispatches reveal Rosecrans’s hopes and anxieties, and presumably those of the chief of staff.

If Bragg intended to fight, and especially if he meant to attack, it was clearly necessary for the Union army to take position further northward lest the Confederates strike in between them and Chattanooga, the necessary base for supplies other than those the army was actually dragging with it over the mountains. Accordingly from the forenoon of September 16 until the second day of the actual battle of Chickamauga Rosecrans’s one concern was lest the Confederates get around his left flank. On September 16 he summoned Granger’s force to take position between the main body and Chattanooga to guard against a Confederate flank

movement, and the moment the head of McCook's columns had reached Thomas's lines on the seventeenth he caused the whole army to begin edging northward along the roads between the Chickamauga Creek and the Missionary Ridge. Garfield's dispatches on this day and the eighteenth and occasional dispatches written by Rosecrans himself all show this concern. They do not indicate any anxiety to avoid battle, in spite of the fact that the hoped-for reinforcements had not arrived, but merely the desire to place the army where it could not be cut off from Chattanooga as the result of a Confederate northward movement. So passed September 17 and 18, amid constantly thickening reports of Confederate activity along the right flank of the cautiously marching army.

The letter above quoted from Garfield, of September 16, is the only one from him during this period of marching and preparing for battle. He must have kept constantly with the commanding general, receiving reports and drafting orders, in the saddle all day and much of the night, for it was a time of intense strain. He was far too busy to write letters. But we find him mentioned by the war correspondents who accompanied the march and occasionally we find from dispatches or reports of the period that he went in person to judge the signs of Confederate activity. By the evening of the eighteenth the presence of enemy forces at close range was so manifest that Rosecrans caused Thomas's corps to continue marching all night, passing behind Crittenden's line and assuming the left wing of the army. And at 9:30 of the next morning, before some of his troops had had any opportunity to rest, Thomas ordered his advance division, that of Brannan, to drive back a Confederate force on his right. With that the battle of Chickamauga began.

When the uproar of the opening engagement came to headquarters, Rosecrans and his staff were still at Crawfish Spring, intent upon bringing up McCook's tired troops from the rear and pushing the whole line to the northward. Since they had been expecting a Confederate attack at any time for twenty-four hours they were not surprised, and set to work at once to assume control of the situation. After

issuing a few more precautionary orders the commanding general hastened to a position nearly behind the center of the army and established headquarters at the famous Widow Glenn house. A war correspondent thus describes the scene: "The general, adjusting his glasses, paced up and down in front of the house, looking ever and anon at the dense clouds of dust which were rising evidently beyond the creek. General Garfield and Col. Morton took forcible possession of a large table at the rear of the Widow Glenn house and while the former wrote dispatches at Gen. Rosecrans' dictation, the latter adjusting his maps and compass attempted to locate the brisk and lively fire which was going on toward the left. . . . The widow, with her children gathered around her, anxious and nervous, asked when she and her children ought to leave and pleasant and tender Garfield, with all the kindness of his great nature stopped his momentous work to assure the old lady."¹

The critical moment in Garfield's career had arrived, for his capacity to act as chief of staff under the strain of battle was put to the test. Let it be remembered that he had never, in all his period of service, taken part in a serious engagement, nor had he even seen a real battlefield other than that of Shiloh, where his troops had arrived on the second day. Both he and Rosecrans were excessively tired from the strain of the preceding week, and Rosecrans, a man of fifty-five years, was close to the limit of his nervous endurance, as events were to reveal. How well Garfield met the test we can only conjecture. Rosecrans expressed himself as satisfied and grateful, and Garfield's dispatches reveal no confusion or ambiguity. How much of Garfield's own mentality we may see in them is a matter of pure guesswork; in all probability he added little but the phraseology, for it was certainly his duty at this crisis to sink every atom of his own individuality in that of his commander.

The situation of the army at the time of the opening of the battle was as follows (see map on page 335): The Union infantry lay along the roads north of Crawfish Spring, its advance division being about eleven miles from Chattanooga.

¹ W. F. G. Shanks, in *New York Herald*, September 29.

Most of the cavalry was in the rear, protecting the wagon trains which bore the supplies and ammunition on which the army must rely until a safe connection was made with the railroad at Chattanooga. Ten miles further to the southward were some infantry and cavalry, left to hold the entrance to Stevens Gap as a protection against possible Confederate raids across the mountains against the railway. One more brigade was at Chattanooga, another was southwest of it guarding the railway, and three more, under Granger,—all that was present of the so-called Reserve Corps,—were placed five miles to the northeastward, protecting the road from Ringgold to Chattanooga against a wide Confederate sweeping movement. The total nominal strength of the body of troops which opened the battle was about 55,000, of which 10,000 were mounted. All were worn with unremitting marching and some had had no chance to eat in a dozen hours.

The country was rough and broken, and much overgrown with scrubby woods, interspersed with fields where rude farming was carried on. Meager farm roads were frequent, but the main turnpike, the Lafayette road, was so placed that it was certain to be the scene of the principal fighting and hence useless if the Confederates attacked from the eastward. The Union army had few and incomplete maps; the topography of the actual battlefield was but dimly comprehended by most of the generals, including the commander-in-chief and his staff. One of the correspondents describes Rosecrans as trying with the aid of the Widow Glenn to guess the probable location of the fighting as the battle opened while waiting for the arrival of couriers from the divisions engaged.

Of the Confederates Rosecrans and Garfield merely knew that they were advancing from across the Chickamauga Creek and that Bragg's original force of not over 40,000 had been largely increased, until it was probably fully as large as the Union army, if not considerably larger. Conjectures varied, but the consensus of opinion at headquarters estimated it at 70,000. This is now known to have been about correct. Bragg had about 73,000 under him during

the battle, of whom about 4,000 did not arrive until the second day. At the time fighting began on September 19 Bragg could bring into action about 65,000 men, nominally. The Southern army was less worn by marching, but was composed of many different units hastily gathered together and was defective in organization. To the Confederate commanders also the topography was little known and to the officers whose troops arrived from Mobile or from Virginia just in time to enter the battle it was a blind tangle and confusion.

As seen from Rosecrans's headquarters, where Garfield sat with map and dispatch book studying the reports brought in from the dense thickets and scrubby fields, the battle of September 19 was a succession of surprises, thrusts into the dark, sudden encounters, retreats, rallies, and equally sudden cessations of fighting. It is clear that General Thomas, who opened the battle, fought the left wing, or the advance,—it might be considered either,—practically at his own discretion. The dispatches that Garfield sent him, for the commanding general, are requests for information, suggestions as to the general aim of the engagement, notification of happenings nearer the center or rear of the army and responses to requests for reinforcements. In no case did Rosecrans send positive orders or instructions. The battle was fought under such conditions as to leave to headquarters the duty of coördinating the movements of the army as a whole, according to the development of fighting, but not the power to direct details or manage the actual battle line except in its own vicinity.

From 9:30 until the early afternoon, Rosecrans's concern was directed toward the extreme left, where he feared an effort on the part of the Confederates to work in between his army and Chattanooga, and as the battle roared up from the woods and roads where Thomas's divisions were entering the engagement, he sent additional forces from McCook's corps, while taking care to draw up the marching columns in the rear. As an example of the general character of Garfield's dispatches to Thomas the following is worth quoting: "Widow Glenn's September 19, 1863 noon. The general

commanding desires you to inform him of the general direction of your line of battle. He suggests that it should be *en echelon* in the general direction of northwest and southeast, with your left hugging the mountain and keeping your right refused. This is based on the supposition that Bragg has formed a line facing westward and is attempting to turn your left by the Ringgold road. Of course circumstances should modify your position."¹ As a matter of fact, the supposition in this dispatch was erroneous; the line suggested was not adopted by Thomas and the discretion properly given him in the last sentence was used to the full. Thomas's line, far from hugging the mountains, was advanced toward Chickamauga Creek and his left was successfully thrown forward, while his right, nearer headquarters, met a stiff and immovable Confederate resistance.

By 2:30 the battle was breaking out violently near the Union center and Crittenden's corps was soon under severe pressure. Clearly Bragg was not trying to turn the Union left. Rosecrans's theory of the Confederate plan had to be changed and steps taken to meet the new situation. A dispatch of 3:10 to Thomas will show how Garfield informed that commander of Rosecrans's changed views. "The tide of battle sweeps to the right and the center is heavily engaged. Crittenden is doing finely on the right. All goes well. Save every available man for reserves who is not needed for work now. If your left is not likely to be threatened soon throw some forces in rear of your centre as reserves. Communicate with Granger. Push the enemy."² Other dispatches ordered Negley's and Sheridan's divisions, the last remaining units of McCook's corps, to move nearer the center, where the firing was heavy and incessant.

After another hour the situation began to look a trifle alarming, for the battle line seemed to be coming nearer through the woods, as though the Union center were falling back. Van Cleve's division, which had been sent at Thomas's request to assist his right wing, *i.e.*, that portion of his command nearest headquarters, was being driven, and head-

¹ *Official Records*, Vol. XXX, pt. i, p. 66.

² *Ibid.*, Vol. XXXI, p. 67.

quarters itself began to come under fire from rifle shots and an occasional shell. Rosecrans acted promptly, and taking Negley's division, of McCook's corps, which he had ordered to this region as a precaution, he sent it into the gap. These reinforcements restored the situation, and Negley's lines, plunging forward into the smoke-filled woods, were soon forcing the Confederates backward. The danger of a break was averted. Yet there remained a gap between Negley's line and Thomas's right division which was at no time filled before the day's fighting ended. The fact was that there was no continuous battle line formed at any time, but each division advanced until it struck enemy forces, and on each side lines were constantly taking opponents in flank and being themselves attacked in the flank. It was rough and bloody work, often at close range and with small opportunity to use artillery to advantage.

By nightfall fighting died down perforce in the shadowy woods. The Confederates had taken the offensive along a line some six miles long and had driven back the Union lines time after time, only to be driven themselves by counterattacks delivered by the new divisions thrown successively into the battle. On the Union side Crittenden's corps had done no more than maintain its position during an afternoon of sharp fighting, but Thomas's corps, strengthened by divisions from both of the others, had gained ground to the eastward, although roughly handled in one place just as darkness came on. On the whole, the day could be called a drawn battle. As seen from headquarters, the army had held its own and there was no reason to be discouraged. There is a confident ring to the wording of almost all Garfield's dispatches during the day. At 8:10 in writing to Granger, commanding the force to the northward, he said: "You must help us in the fight tomorrow by supporting Thomas. What is the news with you? We have repulsed them at nearly every point today though they have attacked with superior numbers."¹

But Garfield's superior, General Rosecrans, seems to have felt no such encouragement from the day's events. He sent a

¹ *Official Records*, Vol. XXX, pt. iii, p. 741.

dispatch to Halleck, and another in the same wording to President Lincoln, to the effect that "by the blessing of Providence the defeat of the enemy will be total tomorrow."¹ But when he assembled his corps commanders for a council relative to the next day's battle, it is the testimony of eye-witnesses that he seemed dejected and the whole atmosphere of the meeting was depressing. The language of Rosecrans's instructions, written by Garfield late at night and embodying the words of the commander, shows quite as much apprehension as confidence and reveals that Rosecrans looked forward to nothing more than a defensive battle, with the ever present danger of a Confederate advance on his left flank hanging over him. His midnight instructions to Thomas indicate this apprehension. "Widow Glenn's 11:45 p.m. The line of battle for to-morrow is your present line and a line which General McCook will form from your right to this place. You will defend your position with the utmost stubbornness. In case our army should be overwhelmed it will retire on Rossville and Chattanooga. Send your trains back to the latter place."² At about the same time three dispatches to Granger, whose command lay to the northward, showed the same preoccupation with the idea of a possible retreat to Rossville. One signed by Garfield ran, "Do you think the enemy will still attempt to turn our left flank again tomorrow? What sort of a pass is Rossville to defend?"³ Rosecrans went into the second day's fighting evidently more than half regarding Rossville Gap as the position which the army must eventually secure in order to be safe.

So the Army of the Cumberland was committed to another day of defensive fighting, for in spite of all the slaughter in the thickets of the Chickamauga valley, the tactical situation remained unaltered. The left was no nearer Chattanooga and the trains of the army were still at Crawfish Spring, guarded by the cavalry, while there was still one infantry brigade left behind at Stevens Gap with trains of wounded and supplies. The Confederates would certainly

¹ *Official Records*, Vol. XXX, pt. iii, p. 136.

² *Ibid.*, pt. i, p. 69.

³ *Ibid.*, pt. iii, p. 741.

renew the attack, and it was apparently Rosecrans's belief that the issue would have to be fought out on the spot with no further marching or manœuvring.

Rosecrans and Garfield were up at an early hour the next morning, riding the lines, inspecting positions and causing rectifications here and there. While they were at their task they received the following dispatch from Thomas, dated 6 a.m.: "I earnestly request that Negley's division be placed on my left immediately. The enemy's skirmishers have been discovered about three-quarters of a mile from our left picket-line, facing toward the Rossville road. A division on my left would be exactly in their front."¹ Rosecrans and his staff went to the threatened wing and from there Garfield sent two dispatches, one to Negley, ordering him to report to Thomas at once, the other to McCook, directing him to "fill the space left vacant by his removal if practicable. The enemy appears to be moving to our left."² Nothing could have been plainer; true the words "if practicable" left McCook some discretion, but the added words explaining the reason for the movement made it imperative for McCook to notify the commanding general at once, if he did not consider it practicable. As it was, McCook took no notice whatever of the order, apparently because he did not wish to disarrange his lines. It is not too much to say that the whole outcome of the battle depended on McCook's disobedience, as a brief analysis will make plain.

To begin with, Rosecrans himself discovered, nearly two hours after the dispatch had been sent, that Negley had not been relieved, but that in response to direct messages from Thomas he had finally started to leave the line. Since the Confederates were directly in front of them, Rosecrans forbade this and permitted only one of Negley's brigades to march away, while with every symptom of irritation at McCook's inaction he turned to Wood of Crittenden's corps and ordered him to replace Negley. Once more slowness prevailed, and it was not until the uproar of musketry and cannon showed that fighting was beginning on the threat-

¹ *Official Records*, Vol. XXX, pt. i, p. 138.

² *Ibid.*, p. 965.

ened wing that Wood finally got his men into line and Negley could send his other two brigades northward. It was now over three hours after the sending of the original order. Thomas meanwhile, growing impatient, had sent for Brannan of his own corps, whose division was at Negley's left, but Rosecrans had once more interposed to prevent making a dangerous gap, permitting only one of Brannan's brigades to go. To make matters worse, the unfortunate Negley, not understanding the topography or the location of Thomas's line, took part of his division and five batteries of artillery to a wholly wrong spot, placing them on a ridge in the rear of the Union center, facing northward. Thus they could oppose the Confederates only after they should have swung around behind the Union line—the very thing Thomas wished to prevent. (See map, page 335.)

On his part Thomas became increasingly disturbed over the nonappearance of Negley, especially when the Confederate attack broke with great fury against his lines and, as he had feared, swept away the solitary brigade from Negley and flowed round his exposed left wing into the rear of his position. The second of Negley's brigades and the single brigade released by Brannan coöperated with Thomas's reserves to expel the assailants, but while the fight was going on Thomas sent message after message to hurry reinforcements. At eleven o'clock, he made a formal written request, in which, it will be noted, he asked for no more than what he had originally wished five hours earlier. "The enemy penetrated a short time since to the road leading to McDonald's house and I fear they are trying to cut off our communication with Rossville through the hills behind the center of our army. I think it therefore is of the utmost importance that Negley's division be ordered to that point—the left of my line."¹

The impression produced at the Widow Glenn house by this series of messages went far beyond the truth, and led Rosecrans into a succession of orders which ultimately wrecked the whole Union army. To him they seemed to indicate that what he most feared was taking place, a general

¹ *Official Records*, Vol. XXX, pt. i, p. 139.

turning movement on the part of the Confederates. So at 10:35 Garfield wrote an order to McCook to start Sheridan's division northward to join Thomas and at 10:45 Van Cleve's division, of Crittenden's corps, was also ordered to Thomas's aid. At the moment when Thomas was repeating his original request for a single division, Rosecrans was sending him three entire ones and one brigade from a fourth. Garfield's dispatch of 10:35 to McCook showed Rosecrans's feelings. "General Thomas is being heavily pressed on the left. . . . The left must be held at all hazards even if the right is wholly drawn back to the present left."¹

While these orders were being written, a staff officer of Thomas, who had come to urge reinforcements, reported that there was a gap directly in front of headquarters between Wood's division and Reynolds's division, where Brannan's troops had been. This was, in fact, a blunder, for most of Brannan's command was still there, but Rosecrans leaped to the conclusion that Brannan also had marched to Thomas's aid and instantly dictated an order, through Bond of his staff, to General Wood, "to close up on Reynolds as fast as possible and support him."² This he handed to Colonel Starling, Crittenden's chief of staff, for transmission. That officer in his own words, "hesitated, not understanding the object of the order, when General Garfield called out . . . that the object of the order was that General Wood should occupy the vacancy made by the removal of Brannan's division, Brannan having been ordered to Thomas' left."³ If Garfield had written the order, he would, after his almost invariable custom, have included the explanatory phrase, but, as it was, the order was absolutely peremptory and when Wood received it he felt compelled to obey it, in spite of the staff officer's objection. So, at the same time that Sheridan's and Van Cleve's divisions were marching toward Thomas's wing, Wood added to the confusion by withdrawing his two brigades from their position and trying to move

¹ *Official Records*, Vol. XXX, pt. i, p. 70.

² *Ibid.*, p. 103.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 983.

“to support Reynolds,” thereby creating a gap where Rosecrans intended to fill one.

By eleven o'clock, accordingly, Rosecrans's misunderstanding of the situation and his hasty series of unnecessary orders had brought about half his army into a state of extreme confusion. Three whole divisions and parts of two others had been ordered to Thomas's left to meet an imaginary turning movement, yet only two brigades were actually near the danger point, while no less than six others were moving along the rough roads or across the fields or were standing aimlessly in the rear of Thomas's lines.

Up to this time the Confederate attack, although fierce and determined, had fallen only upon Thomas's command and, even on the exposed wing, it had been uniformly repulsed. At eleven there came a sort of lull, and if it had been allowed to continue another hour possibly the Army of the Cumberland might have been drawn up again in a solid line. But fortune had no more favors to grant Rosecrans, for at the moment when things were at their very worst for instability and confusion, the left wing of the Confederates suddenly advanced in a carefully prepared and savagely delivered charge. Into the gap created by Wood's withdrawal swarmed Confederates, taking the troops on each side in flank and rear and rendering the positions of the few divisions still in line instantly untenable. And since the break occurred directly in front of headquarters, the first thing the commander and his staff saw was a crowd of broken Union troops running for their lives, amid a terrific uproar of musketry and rebel yells.¹

Then began a desperate effort on the part of the Union commander to stave off disaster. Headquarters as the point for issuing orders to the whole army disappeared, for Rosecrans and his staff, together with Crittenden, McCook and various division commanders, threw themselves into the task of rallying fugitives and trying to form them into lines that would hold, while checking the swarming Confederate masses, wave after wave, by artillery. But the task was impossible, for the three divisions in front of the Confederate

¹ *Official Records*, Vol. XXX, pt. i, p. 979.

THE positions of the Union troops are indicated at the moment of the attack of the Confederate left. The divisions of Sheridan, Van Cleve and Wood are shown marching to the Union left. The arrows show the direction of the assault. A is where Thomas requested Negley to be placed; B is where that general actually went. C shows the gap made by Wood's obedience to the "fatal order." Garfield was with Rosecrans at D, field headquarters, when the rout began, retreated with him down the Dry Valley Road, and left him near Rossville Gap. Rosecrans continued to Chattanooga, Garfield returned to the battlefield by the Lafayette road.

advance were so placed that they were pushed apart and outflanked and there were no reinforcements at hand, since the original plan of holding all of Crittenden's corps in reserve had been abandoned and its units sent to aid Thomas. In spite of individual heroism on the part of commanders and of desperate charges by outnumbered Union regiments into the teeth of the advancing Confederates, every effort proved futile and by the end of an hour's disorganized and broken resistance the Union right wing had been ruined as a fighting force. Most of its components had dissolved into flying groups which, with wagons and such artillery as escaped capture, streamed down the Dry Valley road toward Chattanooga. Here and there parts of regiments preserved their organization but only in retreat. Over the whole region swept the Confederates in triumph gathering in prisoners and cannon, ammunition and equipment.

Concerning his own part in this hour of despair and fruitless effort Garfield never spoke or wrote. All we know, from the reports of eyewitnesses, is that he stayed with his chief, laboring vainly to hold the troops together until the game was up; the two men turning to fly only when the last fugitives had passed them and they were actually under fire from a Confederate line. They then retreated with the mass of broken infantry along the Dry Valley road, riding part of the time down a brook bed to pass ahead of the crowd. Through constant scenes of flight and disorder the little group pushed on until they had left the rest behind, riding toward Chattanooga by way of Rossville. For Rosecrans it marked the end of his physical and nervous powers. His courage, hitherto unshaken by severe trials, now collapsed with the rout of his army and according to contemporary testimony he was practically prostrate in will and energy.¹ From the way the break had occurred, extending on both sides of headquarters, he had been entirely cut off from the left of the army and, for all he knew, that wing also was engulfed in the ruin. When he encountered some of Negley's troops in flight he felt certain that Thomas's corps also was

¹ H. M. Cist, *Army of the Cumberland*, p. 226; *Memoirs of Henry Villard*, Vol. II, p. 165.

in rout, since Negley's division had been sent to the extreme left.¹ All that was left for him was to ride to Chattanooga and, with the two brigades left there, make such preparations as he could for the reception of those fugitives who could escape Confederate pursuit.

At this point Garfield's superior elasticity of temper came into play, for, retaining his courage and judgment, he was by no means certain that Thomas's corps was in flight. There was still a good deal of firing going on behind Missionary Ridge, which to his ears suggested organized resistance. When the party drew near Rossville Gap, where the Lafayette road, along which the army had been fighting, joined the Dry Valley road, Garfield asked his commander to permit him to ride back toward the battlefield and discover whether Thomas and Granger were still holding out. The place of the chief of staff is by his commander so long as there are orders to send and plans to execute, but by his retreat to Chattanooga Rosecrans was cutting himself off from any possibility of affecting the battle—assuming that it was still going on—and was keeping only the sending of dispatches to the outlying fragments of the army, a task that any staff officer could attend to. Moreover, Rosecrans's condition was such as to suggest that he was temporarily, at least, incapable of controlling the situation. So Garfield got his commander's permission and started back toward the field with one of Thomas's staff officers who had been swept off in the stampede and two volunteers.

The party traversed the Lafayette turnpike in safety for several miles, drawing nearer constantly to the position held at the beginning of the battle by Thomas's left wing. Intermittent artillery fire and the crackle of skirmishing showed that there was still fighting going on and the absence of any fugitives was encouraging. Suddenly from the left of the road a sharp musketry fire was opened. The group had stumbled upon Confederate pickets and had to leave the road and ride for their lives. One orderly fell dead, one horse was killed and Garfield's horse was wounded, but a comparatively short dash took him to the shelter of some Union

¹ Cist, *Army of the Cumberland*, p. 224.

troops. Pushing on a mile further he presently found, to his inexpressible relief, that Thomas had succeeded in forming a new line, had brought the Confederate advance to a standstill and that the battle was by no means lost. At the ruins of a cabin—known to fame as the Snodgrass house—Garfield met two corps commanders, Thomas and Granger, and several division commanders and was able to give them the first authentic information concerning the rout of the right wing.

This ride of Garfield back to the field, which, although a creditable display of courage, involved no unusual risk, produced a marked effect at the time through the contrast it offered to the behavior of all the other generals who had been swept away in the rout. Not only Rosecrans but Crittenden and McCook fled to Chattanooga, and none of the commanders who were engaged in rallying their broken troops behind Missionary Ridge made a move to return to the fight until after the battle was over. General Wood expressed the sentiments of the troops on the ridge when he wrote in his official report,¹ "After the disastrous rout on the right General Garfield made his way back to the battle-field (showing thereby that the road was open to all who might choose to follow) and came to where my command was engaged." Other officers in their reports mentioned his return—Harker,² Granger and of course Thomas. Two newspaper correspondents who were present, writing for influential journals, described his arrival in glowing language, W. F. G. Shanks in the New York *Herald* of September 27 and F. C. Furay of the Cincinnati *Gazette*.³ Colonel Dan McCook, who commanded the brigade with which Garfield and his escort took refuge, marked with a cross on his sketch map of the battle-field "the place where General Garfield ran the gantlet."⁴ In short, he presented to the part of the army still fighting the spectacle of the one unbeaten officer of the routed wing who retained the courage to find the place where the cannon

¹ *Official Records*, Vol. XXX, pt. i, p. 638.

² *Ibid.*, pt. i, pp. 253, 695, 856.

³ F. Moore, *Rebellion Record*, Vol. VII, p. 416.

⁴ *Official Records*, Vol. XXX, pt. i, p. 872.

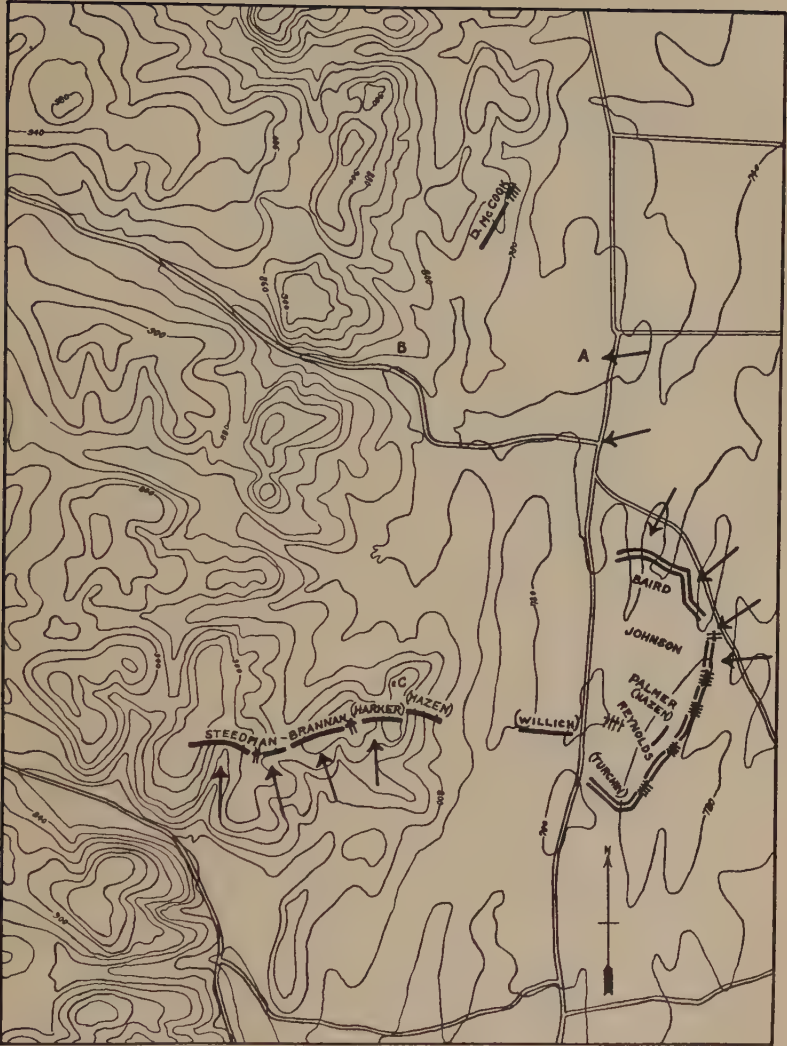
were still thundering and the rifles cracking, instead of seeking safety miles away.

Garfield's first duty was to send a report back to Rosecrans, so sitting down amid the group of officers and gathering such news from them as they could pour into his ears he wrote the following hasty dispatch: "Battlefield, Five miles south of Rossville. Sept. 20, 1863 3:45 p.m. I arrived here ten minutes ago via Rossville. General Thomas has Brannan's, Baird's, Reynolds', Woods', Palmer's and Johnson's divisions still intact after terrible fighting. Granger is here, closed up with Thomas and both are fighting terribly on the right. Sheridan is in with the bulk of his division, but in ragged shape, though plucky and fighting. General Thomas holds nearly his old ground of this morning. . . . The hardest fighting I have seen today is now going on here. I hope General Thomas will be able to hold on here until night and will not need to fall back farther than Rossville; perhaps not any. All fighting men should be stopped there and the Dry Valley and Lookout roads held by them. I think we may in the main retrieve our morning disaster. I never saw better fighting than our men are now doing. The rebel ammunition must be nearly exhausted. Ours is fast failing. If we can hold out an hour more it will be all right. Granger thinks we can defeat them badly tomorrow if all our forces come in. I think you had better come to Rossville tonight and bring ammunition."¹

Garfield was here writing in his own person, although reflecting the information and opinions poured in upon him as he sat by the Snodgrass house in the midst of the rattle of musketry, explosions of shells, shouts and all the terrible confusion that reigns back of a fighting line at the height of an attack. What he told Rosecrans was substantially correct, although he was misinformed as to Sheridan's presence. That officer's forces, shattered in the rout, were miles away at the time he wrote. But Granger had brought his 8,000 men to Thomas's assistance and, leaving one brigade to guard the Union left,—that with which Garfield had taken refuge on his arrival,—he had used the others under Steed-

¹ *Official Records*, Vol. XXX, pt. i, p. 141.

GARFIELD approached the field from the North and came under fire at A. After taking refuge with McCook, he continued to C, Thomas's headquarters at Snodgrass Hill, where he remained until fighting stopped. The Confederate attacks after Garfield's arrival are shown by the arrows. When Thomas withdrew his left wing, Reynolds's division drove the Confederates who were at A, and re-formed near McCook. Thomas took his post at B where he placed his troops to cover the road running west. Garfield and Granger joined Thomas at B after fighting had stopped and after Thomas had issued orders for a general retirement.



CHICKAMAUGA BATTLEFIELD 3.40 P.M., SEPT. 20

man to extend the new line, built up of fragments of regiments that had escaped from the rout. Against this line, which was on a wooded ridge facing southward, the Confederates of Longstreet's command, who had earlier smashed the Union right, were now directing attack after attack with the confidence and dash of men who hoped to complete their victory. The fighting was at close range and bloody beyond all precedent, for the Union troops, inspired by the knowledge that only by holding their ground could they save the army, fought as never before.

Having dispatched his report to Rosecrans by an officer who made his way westward over the hills, Garfield remained with Thomas and Granger on or near Snodgrass Hill watching the struggle. The tension was terrific, for the Confederates were able to mass almost double the Union numbers against the ridge, backed by five batteries as against two. Within a few minutes after Garfield's arrival, the rattle of musketry and rising smoke showed that on the other wing the Confederates were resuming the attack along the Lafayette road, against the divisions hard-pressed in the morning. It was now a question not only of holding out on the ridge but of the possible necessity of dangerous manœuvring to extricate the southernmost divisions of Thomas's corps. There were not over 25,000 Union troops on the field and the whole Confederate force, except some cavalry, lay before them in the woods, at least 40,000 still capable of fighting. Darkness would save the army. The question was, Could it hold out until the September sunset?

Under the circumstances the Union defenders of the ridge were stimulated to exertions almost incredible. Upon all who took part in the fighting of that terrible afternoon remained an indelible impression of heroism. It breathed through the reports of the battle written a few days later and it permeated every reference to that day in reminiscences, speeches and private letters for generations. To Garfield the situation seemed typified in the powerful presence of Thomas, imperturbable, silent, enduring, the "Rock of Chickamauga." And the defense was successful, for when night fell the Army of the Cumberland was neither dispersed nor captured but

stood intact, although fearfully exhausted, on the battlefield. At one place on the ridge Steedman's brigades, which had shot off all their ammunition, yielded ground at the very end, but elsewhere the line against which Longstreet's command had dashed itself all the afternoon stood to the last. The opportune arrival of Hazen's division, which marched across from the other wing, assisted in hurling back the last Confederate assault at the east end of the ridge, and the troops that Garfield's old schoolmate thus assisted were none other than his old brigade of the preceding year, now under Harker. Of this General Wood remarked in his report of the battle: "The brigade which made so determined a resistance on the crest of the narrow ridge during all that long September afternoon had been commanded by General Garfield when he belonged to my division. The men remarked his presence with satisfaction and were delighted that he was a witness of the splendid fighting they were doing."¹

The Confederate advance on the extreme left was pushed so far forward, as the afternoon wore on, that Thomas decided as a precautionary measure to withdraw his own troops from the semicircular position they had held all day. To make matters worse, the whole Confederate line along the Union left became active, and at the moment when Thomas's orders to withdraw were being executed it delivered a general attack. This compelled the perilous manœuvre of retreating under fire. Thomas himself left Snodgrass Hill a little before five, while the fighting was still going on, and meeting the southernmost of his own divisions, that of Reynolds, directed it to "clear the road" beyond Baird's division, in order to relieve the pressure. This was accomplished by a brilliant charge led by Turchin's brigade, which took the Confederate division that was on the road in flank, utterly routed it and enabled a new line to be formed extending from the Lafayette road southwestwardly. The other divisions of Thomas's corps extricated themselves with varying degrees of difficulty, Palmer's and Baird's divisions in fair order, but Johnson's in great confusion, owing to Confederates closing in from three sides. Naturally Polk's

¹ *Official Records*, Vol. XXX, pt. i, p. 638.

Confederates supposed they were driving the Union defenders, and when their troops, rushing across the vacated area, met those from Longstreet's wing advancing from the south a tremendous shout of exultation went up, a rebel yell so extraordinary that it is mentioned in numerous reports of the battle, Union as well as Confederate.

But in reality the yielding of that position was voluntary on Thomas's part and, after all, the main point was gained, the safety of the Army of the Cumberland. As General Bragg in his dispatches and in his report of the battle said, "The enemy although beaten, still confronted us," and he spoke accurately, for the new position along which Thomas's divisions were placed was better for defense than any other assumed, commanded the communications with Chattanooga and, in the opinion of Granger and of Garfield, was perfectly capable of being held. At some time after he had gone to the new position, however, an order reached Thomas from Rosecrans, written after he arrived at Chattanooga nearly two hours earlier, in complete ignorance of the situation at the front. In it Thomas was told "to assume command of all forces and with Crittenden and McCook take a strong position and assume a threatening attitude at Rossville."¹ That Rosecrans had no idea where Thomas was is shown by another dispatch he sent a little earlier, 4 p.m., to Garfield saying: "Ascertain the extent of the disaster and report. . . . Should General Thomas be retiring in order, tell him to resist the enemy's advance, retiring on Rossville tonight." The best he hoped for was that Thomas might be able to rally part of the army at Rossville. This order to retire Thomas chose to consider imperative and a little after six o'clock he sent instructions to the division commanders to march to Rossville.

Garfield meanwhile appears to have stayed on the ridge with his old brigade and division, and in company also with General Granger until the fighting stopped. He has not left any personal narrative of his doings on this occasion, but there is evidence to show both that he was at that point and that he did not accompany General Thomas when he super-

¹ *Official Records*, Vol. XXX, pt. i, p. 140.

vised the replacing of the troops to protect the left wing after 5 p.m. nor rejoin him until after dark. In a letter to Rosecrans, written December 14, 1870, he said: "Gordon Granger will tell you that both he and I strenuously urged Thomas not to retire on Rossville, but that he had already given the order. I did not understand that your order to him was peremptory but only discretionary and both Granger and I were exceedingly anxious to have the army remain on the ground it had so valorously held during the day. I think if we had been with Thomas when your dispatch was received the order to withdraw would not have been given." The time when he joined Thomas is fixed by a report in which he said, referring to his own dispatch of 4 p.m., "Your order . . . was received a little after sunset and communicated to Generals Thomas and Granger."

Then and later Garfield felt that a well-nigh fatal mistake was being made, and that the army ought never to have abandoned the field. He had seen Brannan, Harker and Hazen drive the last Confederate assailants from the ridge, and when he left it, in company with Granger, to join Thomas, both were thrilled with a sense of triumphant defense. It was "a little after sunset" when he found Thomas and, as he reported to Rosecrans, "communicated to him" the order he had received, and it was doubtless at this time that he and Granger made their unavailing protest against withdrawing from the field. While they were there Granger, who was inordinately fond of artillery practice, caused Barnett's battery, which protected the new position, at 6 p.m. to "close the action by two successive six-gun discharges,"¹ against the badly shaken Confederates, who had scarcely recovered from their severe handling from Turchin's brigade. These closing salvos were frequently mentioned by Garfield, notably in his oration on Thomas's life and character, when he said, "When night had closed over the combatants, the last sound of battle was the booming of Thomas' shells bursting among his baffled and retreating assailants."²

Garfield's sense of triumph was not disturbed by sundry

¹ *Official Records*, Vol. XXX, pt. i, p. 883.

² Hinsdale, ed., *Works of James A. Garfield*, Vol. I, p. 669.

unfavorable aspects of the closing scenes of the battle. Of the falling back of Steedman's division at the western end of the ridge, just as the battle stopped, he seems to have been unaware, as also of the capture of three Union regiments whose position had been uncovered by this withdrawal, just as the Union forces were beginning their march away from the battlefield. Doubtless he knew of the losses suffered by the Union left wing in withdrawing and the confusion into which they fell, in the darkness, but this was to him, as to Thomas, a mere episode in what was essentially a successful defense. And in this he was right, for the Army of the Cumberland had saved itself—had fought out its salvation from an appallingly dangerous situation, and at the coming of night stood, still intact, on the low ridges in the moonlight. Undisturbed by the Confederates they left the field of slaughter and marched to Rossville Gap, where a new line was formed before the next morning, along which the rallied fugitives of the morning, once more with their commands, were placed.

Garfield went ahead of the retreating columns and from Rossville sent a second report to Rosecrans, in which he summed up the day's fighting in a tone of triumphant confidence that undoubtedly reflected the exaltation of the officers and men as well as his own fighting spirit. "8:40 p.m. I have this moment returned from the front. I wrote you a long dispatch as I arrived on the field and while the battle was in progress, but it was so difficult to get communication to the rear that I fear you have not yet received it. . . . General Thomas has fought a most terrific battle and has damaged the enemy badly. General Granger's troops moved up just in time and fought magnificently. From the time I reached the battle-field (3:45 p.m.) till sunset the fighting was by far the fiercest I have ever seen. Our men not only held their ground but at many points drove the enemy splendidly. Longstreet's Virginians have got their bellies full. . . . The disaster on the right cannot, of course, be estimated now. It must be very considerable in men and material especially the latter. The rebels have, however, done their best to-day and I believe we can whip them to-morrow. I be-

lieve we can now crown the whole battle with victory. Granger regards them as thoroughly whipped to-night and thinks they would not renew the fight were we to remain on the field. . . . Your order to retire on this place was received a little after sunset and communicated to Generals Thomas and Granger. The troops are now moving back and will be here in good shape and strong position before morning. I hope you will not budge an inch from this place but come up early in the morning and if the rebs try it on accommodate them. . . . If I am not needed at headquarters to-night I will stay here. I am half dead with fatigue. Answer if I can do anything.”¹

The persistence and fighting spirit of Garfield and the exaltation of mood after what he had witnessed breathe through this whole dispatch. One would suppose that it would have kindled a flame of confidence in Rosecrans’s breast and inspired him to heroic efforts. But Rosecrans was incapable of response. His only reply was this: “You may stay all night. If the enemy are drifting toward our left (Rossville position) have men ordered up. I like your suggestions.”² The fact was, Rosecrans was a beaten man. During the hours from four to nine he remained at Chattanooga, waiting in helpless suspense for news from the front but doing practically nothing. By five o’clock he seems to have received Garfield’s first dispatch, for he sent telegrams to Burnside and to Halleck, describing the “disaster” and stating that Thomas with seven divisions “remained intact at last news.” His only acknowledgment of Garfield’s first message from the field was this: “Your dispatch of 3:45 received. What you propose is correct. I have seen Furry who left at 5 p.m. I trust General Thomas has been able to hold his position. Ammunition will be sent up.”³ Garfield evidently had not received this when he wrote his Rossville report at 8:40. Still later some rather querulous orders were sent to Mitchell with the cavalry, but no vigorous decided action was taken in any quarter, nor did Garfield’s fighting

¹ *Official Records*, Vol. XXX, pt. i, p. 144.

² *Ibid.*, p. 145.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 71.

dispatches evoke any response in his commander, other than brief acknowledgments.

With the commanding general thus passive, the question of challenging the Confederates on the Rossville line had to be solved by the general on the spot and once more Thomas declined to take any chances. At 1:30 a.m. Garfield sent a dispatch reflecting Thomas's views, which were squarely in opposition to his own. "I have been to General Thomas to inquire what disposition he had made for fight in the morning. We do not seem to be in the best trim for an early fight. I hope you will get here as soon as possible to organize the army and victory before the storm sets in."¹ By daybreak the tone of Garfield's messages had entirely altered and he telegraphed to Rosecrans: "7:45 a.m. I do not feel sure of this line as a good one for a general battle and I do not know how much reliance can be placed on the stampeded troops. . . . On the whole I do not feel sure but that you ought to remain at Chattanooga till we see the developments and organize the rear."² This was the result of Thomas's judgment, which invariably chose the cautious alternative; a trait which, on this occasion, could only have been over-ridden by Rosecrans's own decision to take chances. To Garfield it was a fatal blunder, the abandonment of all chance for victory, but, loyal to Thomas, he never mentioned this view except in private letters.

By the afternoon of September 21 Garfield was again with Rosecrans, and headquarters began once more to function. At 5:30 orders were sent to Thomas to withdraw the army, orders phrased in Garfield's specific style. Rosecrans was again taking charge of the situation. Orders were sent with vigor to the cavalry and mounted infantry and steps were taken to secure communications and guard the fords of the river. It is impossible not to see in this resumption of command by Rosecrans the influence of his energetic and undefeated chief of staff, who, if he could not induce his commander to fight any longer, could at least galvanize him into taking the steps necessary to secure the safety of his

¹ *Official Records*, Vol. XXX, pt. i, p. 146.

² *Ibid.*, p. 147.

army. During the night of the twenty-first the Army of the Cumberland, which had stood at Rossville all day undisturbed except by a few skirmishers, withdrew to Chattanooga.

For a day or two there was suspense lest the Confederates should attack before the work of intrenching was completed, and in the midst of unremitting efforts to stabilize and organize the place for defense Garfield wrote the following letter, in which the reaction from the battle's exaltation can plainly be seen. "Chattanooga, Sept. 23, 1863. I know you will pardon me for not writing sooner and even now I have only time to write a few words. I would not now, had I time, recount the events of Saturday, Sunday and Monday. The recollection of them fills me with pride and grief commingled. We are now in the peninsula which this place fills and the masses of the rebel army are closed in around us. There is no doubt that they have double or triple our numbers. Burnside will not reach us for six days. We must therefore save ourselves, if saved at all. If calamity befalls us you may be sure we shall sell ourselves as dearly as possible. It is now the early morning and all is still, I would not even if I could tell you all that is in my heart. I would only say that a picture of unutterable dearness is in my soul as I think of you and Trot and our dear circle of precious ones at Hiram. Give this word to them for me. . . . Keep up a brave cheerful heart. The country will triumph even if we do not. I hope you will never have cause to blush on my account."

In a letter written two days later, after the danger of attack had disappeared, the tendency showed itself to extract comfort from the situation by emphasizing the importance of the occupation of Chattanooga. But the most significant words are those in which Garfield referred to the termination of the battle, expressing an opinion he held during the rest of his life. "I have been so perfectly overwhelmed with work and weariness for the last three days that I have not been able to write to you . . . and I will only now write a sentence to assure you that you need have no apprehension for the safety of the army. I will not attempt now, perhaps not till I see you, to give a history of the battle, which was

much the fiercest we have had in the west, perhaps anywhere, during the war. I will only say it was won—and then abandoned—giving the enemy an opportunity to follow and injure us, but he was too much crippled to do so till we had strengthened ourselves in this place and were able to repulse all his attempts. The campaign is successful, and Chattanooga will be held—thus the great end of our movement has been accomplished even if the battle be considered lost. I am very much worn down with fatigue. . . . I kept up finely until the trouble was over, and now the reaction has come on, it will take me some days to gather up again.”

From September 21 until November 25 the Union army lay behind its intrenchments at Chattanooga, but Garfield's connection with it lasted only until October 18. It was during these last weeks of Garfield's service as chief of staff that Rosecrans's unfitness for further command was made manifest. It was his plain duty to keep open communications with the Nashville railway, to plan for future movements and, while so doing, to reorganize his severely battered army, but of these three tasks the last was the only one that he carried through. He failed to keep open adequate communications, failed to make practicable plans for the future and showed an invincible reluctance to take any aggressive step whatever. If the comments of a bitter-tongued observer, Charles A. Dana, are to be accepted, he was in a state of moral collapse, unwilling to take any responsibilities and content to let his army stagnate behind intrenchments with insufficient food while the Confederates raided his communications.¹

Whatever power or influence Garfield had had over his chief seems to have departed with the end of the battle. It has been abundantly shown how utterly he failed to induce Rosecrans to show himself on the field in the late afternoon and evening of September 20. There is evidence that he failed similarly to prevent him from abandoning without a struggle a point vital to the army's communications. To supply the army with any ease from Bridgeport, the end of

¹ *Official Records*, Vol. XXX, pt. i, pp. 201-221; *Memoirs of Henry Villard*, Vol. II, p. 185; W. F. Smith, *Mil. Hist. Soc. Mass.*, Vol. VIII, p. 157.

the railroad line, it was necessary that Lookout Mountain, which commanded the intervening road, should be held. Rosecrans had left a brigade there during the battle, but at the first signs of a Confederate advance against the position, he ordered it withdrawn. The result was to give the Confederates the command of the valley roads by which supplies could most easily be brought and to force the wagon trains to struggle across almost impassable trails over the hills. Dana wrote to Stanton¹ (October 12): "Both Granger and Garfield earnestly protested against this order and contended that the mountain and road could be held by not more than seven regiments against the whole power of the enemy. There can, I think, be no question that they were right, but Rosecrans . . . pettishly rejected all their arguments and the mountain was given up." Villard makes the same statement,² that Rosecrans ordered the withdrawal "against the protest of his chief of staff and General Granger as I was repeatedly told by the former. They argued with him that from 1500 to 2000 men would suffice to hold the ground against any force of the enemy and distinctly warned him of the certain consequences of the other course; but he would not be convinced, and the hazardous step was taken." It has been argued that Rosecrans's force was insufficient³ but in view of the importance of easy communications it would seem that the effort was worth making. At all events, Garfield's greater pugnacity was once more foiled.

The one thing Rosecrans did achieve was a reorganization of the army, made necessary in part by the severe losses of the battle, and in part by the consolidation of two corps hitherto commanded by Crittenden and McCook into a single one, which was given to Granger. The removal of these two corps commanders was mainly due to the fact that each of them, like Rosecrans, had fled from the battlefield after the rout, had gone to Chickamauga and made no effort to rejoin their troops until after the battle. Dana, the Assistant Secretary of War, who was present during the last part of

¹ *Official Records*, Vol. XXX, pt. i, p. 215.

² *Memoirs*, Vol. II, p. 202.

³ Smith, *Mil. Hist. Soc. Mass.*, Vol. VIII, p. 156.

the campaign and sent frequent reports of the condition of things in the army after the battle, quotes Garfield as joining with several other officers in holding that the two generals were too discredited to be permitted to retain their commands.¹

From September 23 until October 10 Garfield labored heavily to assist his chief. His name is signed to scores of orders and dispatches, nearly all of them relating to small details, and there is evidence that he assisted him to the best of his ability in carrying through the reorganization, which seems to have been a satisfactory piece of work. One glimpse of him appears in some reminiscences of General Steedman, who, on finding himself reduced to the command of a brigade after having commanded the division which, by its timely arrival, had saved the day and had lost nearly one-half of its numbers in the process, naturally flew into a rage and after a violent scene with Rosecrans refused the command and threatened to resign from the army. "In a few minutes," he said, "I got a note from Gen. Garfield . . . asking me to come at once to his head-quarters. I would not have gone for any other man but I admired and loved Garfield, and have never ceased to do so. . . . I went over and found him up to his ears in work. He spoke to me about the resignation and remonstrated with me . . . using powerful arguments to enforce his request." Ultimately General Thomas joined Garfield, and between them they dissuaded Steedman.² When his work was completed Garfield wrote to his mother as follows (October 13)—the only home letter preserved from this period: "You can have no idea of the amount of work I have had to do for the last two months. You must not think I have forgotten you. . . . I have great reason to thank our Heavenly Father for his mercy to me in saving my life where so many fell. I had very little expectation of passing through unharmed and how I escaped death I do not know. My horse Billy was not killed. He was slightly wounded but he is now well again and I love him all the more for being hit. . . . General Rosecrans is going to send me to Washington on

¹ *Official Records*, Vol. XXX, pt. i, p. 204.

² *New York Sun*, November 26, 1879.

business in a few days and I shall go back home from there early in November."

On October 10 Rosecrans issued the following general order: "Brig. Gen. J. A. Garfield has been chosen by his fellow-citizens to represent them in the councils of the nation. His high intelligence, spotless integrity, business capacity and thorough acquaintance with the wants of the army will render his services more valuable if possible, to the country in Congress than with us. Reluctantly yielding to this consideration, the commanding general relieves him from duty as Chief of Staff. In doing so he returns his thanks to General Garfield for the invaluable assistance he has rendered him by wise councils and assiduous labors as well as for his gallantry, good judgment and efficiency at the battle of Chickamauga."¹

Five days later Garfield set forth for Washington, carrying the reports of the battle and the campaign.² On his way through Tennessee he sent back a series of reports on the condition of communications, full of military detail but couched in the friendly language which showed his continued regard for his late commander. In the last one, dated Nashville, October 19, he said: "It is rumored here that General Grant and the Secretary of War are at Louisville and start for this place by special train tomorrow morning. What does it mean?"³ The answer to this question he found in the newspapers of the next day, which announced that Grant had been placed in supreme command over all forces west of the mountains and that Thomas had replaced Rosecrans in command of the Army of the Cumberland. Clearly this step had been taken by the War Department without waiting for the official reports of the campaign, as the culmination of a dissatisfaction which had been constantly growing ever since the early spring, and without other knowledge of the facts of the battle than the narratives of newspaper correspondents and the private dispatches sent from the army by C. A.

¹ *Official Records*, Vol. XXX, pt. iv, p. 249.

² *Ibid.*, p. 390.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 479.

Dana, Assistant Secretary of War, who had been sent to the front as an official observer. (See Chap. XXIII.)

On reaching Louisville Garfield was immediately summoned into conference by Secretary Stanton, in company with General Steedman, who was still smarting with his anger at Rosecrans, and crossquestioned concerning the battle. Years later Garfield, in a letter to Rosecrans (January 19, 1880), said that he defended him stoutly against Stanton's criticism, but, whatever friendly efforts he may have made, it is clear that he could not deny the patent facts of the afternoon of the twentieth or the subsequent failures during the blockade of Chattanooga. Stanton's impression of the interview appears in a telegram of October 21 to the War Department: "Generals Garfield and Steedman are here on their way home. Their representations of the incidents of the battle of Chickamauga more than confirm the worst that has reached us from other sources as to the conduct of the commanding general and the great credit that is due to General Thomas."¹ Stanton's allusion is of course to Dana's dispatches, which for three weeks had been urging Rosecrans's removal for incompetence with constantly rising emphasis.

When Garfield reached Washington and had delivered his documents to Halleck, he was promptly called on to make political speeches of a kind such as he had never contemplated, as described in a letter to his wife (October 30): "I arrived here day before yesterday morning and had hardly got my blue overcoat off before Sec. Chase sent a demand that I should go with him to Baltimore to an emancipation meeting. I did so and found from 15,000 to 20,000 people assembled on Monument Square and the speakers—many of them life-long slaveholders—made the square, bold issue for immediate and unconditional abolition in Maryland. I was never more delighted and astonished, and when I spoke to them the same words I would address to our people on the Reserve and heard their long applause I felt as if the political millennium had come." Garfield felt unable to resist the pressing call of the Maryland abolition party to assist in

¹ *Official Records*, Vol. XXXI, pt. i, p. 684.

the campaign, and so he reported that he was going "to speak a few times on the eastern shore."

This done, he returned to Washington and, as his narrative of 1873 says, "had several interviews with the President and General Halleck on the military situation at Chattanooga and on the condition and wants of the Army." It is greatly to be regretted that of these interviews no report was ever preserved by Garfield himself or by any of the participants, for in them must have been comprised all that the ex-chief of staff knew and all the military conclusions that he had drawn. At the same time he received his final military reward in the shape of promotion to the rank of Major General of Volunteers, the commission to date as of September 19. It was the general belief that this compliment was due largely to his ride back to the field on the twentieth. It is further said by Garfield's biographer in the regimental history of the Forty-second and by other authorities close to Garfield at that time, that Thomas offered him a command, either a division or, according to one account, a corps. The personal narrative among the Garfield papers which is headed "Dictated by J. A. Garfield for the use of biographers visiting at Mentor," says: "After Rosecrans' removal Thomas . . . was exceedingly anxious to have me come back into the army and tendered me in a private letter, the command of a corps if I would go. I very much wanted to go back." If he should choose to continue in the army his outlook for distinction was all that could be hoped for; he had won his advancement and was *persona grata*, not only to the Washington authorities, but also to the commander of the Army of the Cumberland.

The choice could not, however, be longer postponed, for Congress was to open on December 5. What decided the outcome was the wish of President Lincoln, the "second-rate country lawyer." Writing to President Hopkins of Williams College Garfield said: "I have resigned my place in the army and have taken my seat in Congress. I did this with regret, for I had hoped not to leave the field till every insurgent state had returned to its allegiance. But the President told me he dared not risk a single vote in the House and he

needed men in Congress who were practically acquainted with the wants of the army. I did not feel it right to consult my own preference in such a case." But with characteristic unwillingness finally to close any door, he clung to the idea of a possible return to the army. In the same letter just quoted he added, "Should the war continue I may return to the field in the spring," and until the summer of 1864 he continued to speak of the possibility. "Secretary Stanton," he wrote to his wife (December 7), "assures me that he will hold my place in the army open for me at any time I choose to return."

Before taking leave of this subject it may be necessary, in a biography of General Garfield, to consider briefly whether he was successful in his position of chief of staff. Direct contemporary evidence, furnished by the one man most interested, namely, General Rosecrans, is wholly to the effect that he was. The eulogistic remarks made in Rosecrans's report of the Tullahoma campaign have already been quoted, as also those in the final order relieving him from duty. Another statement still more precise was inserted by Rosecrans in his report on the battle of Chickamauga: "To Brig. Gen. James A. Garfield, chief of staff, I am especially indebted for the clear and ready manner in which he seized the points of action and movement and expressed in orders the ideas of the general commanding."¹

Comments from military critics on the technical ability of General Garfield as a writer of orders—to take the most obvious feature in his duties—are lacking. There were occasional controversies between corps or division commanders over the wording of orders, but no case involving any ambiguity in one of his dispatches has been detected, and Rosecrans's words in the Chickamauga report seem emphatic on this point. On two important occasions General McCook did not obey orders and on the first of these he alleged the language of a dispatch of the chief of staff as justifying him. This was when, on September 14, he explained that he had not marched directly toward Thomas's position from Summerville on the ground that a dispatch of Garfield to

¹ *Official Records*, Vol. XXX, pt. i, p. 63.

Thomas indicated the intervening territory to be in possession of the enemy. The dispatch in question is printed in the records and upon it two comments may be made. In the first place, it nowhere says what General McCook claimed to find in it; and, in the second place, it was not written by Garfield but by Colonel Goddard, the adjutant general.¹ The second time McCook failed to obey an order was when he ignored Garfield's dispatch of 6:30 a.m. the second day at Chickamauga to relieve Negley's division. For this McCook never furnished any explanation whatever, except to say that he acted "as soon as the order reached him." Whatever may be said of McCook's action on these occasions, it certainly was no fault of the chief of staff that he failed to obey.

The disasters of the second day of the battle of Chickamauga after McCook's disobedience were almost wholly due to staff blunders. None of these, however, can be laid to Garfield, who merely "expressed in orders the ideas of the commander-in-chief." It was not his business, under the system then in vogue, to oversee the execution of orders, and the failure of Negley to take the proper position, the absence of officers to conduct the brigades which marched toward Thomas's left wing to the proper place, the failure of Thomas himself to know why Negley's division had not reached the left wing—all these were due to failures of Thomas's staff, not the staff of the commanding general. As for the "fatal order" which Rosecrans issued, as the result of another staff blunder in telling him that Brannan's division had moved, that happened to be almost the only order from headquarters that Garfield did not write and its unqualified and unexplained language which puzzled General Wood, its recipient, and led him into a preposterous movement, was undoubtedly taken down verbatim by Major Bond from Rosecrans's own lips. The sworn statement of Crittenden's chief of staff, Colonel Starling, to the effect that General Garfield "called out" a verbal explanation to the order, shows without much doubt that if he had written it the reason would have been included, in which case General Wood would have seen that, as Colonel Starling remarked,

¹ *Official Records*, Vol. XXX, pt. iii, pp. 564, 1007.

"there was no order." The whole history of the battle might well have been different. The man to blame here is not Major Bond, of course, but Rosecrans himself, who leaped to a conclusion and acted on it without leaving any discretion to the division commander. Certainly Garfield did his best here to prevent a blunder.

As to the other aspect of Garfield's position, his status as collaborator and assistant in military planning, there is in existence a statement in General D. S. Stanley's recollections to the effect that "he had no military ability nor could he learn anything."¹ This need not be taken too seriously. General Stanley, as his record shows, was a man of a capitious, not to say quarrelsome, disposition, with a series of difficulties with other officers to his credit. Furthermore, he had some of his sharpest quarrels with men in the army who were Garfield's special friends, General W. B. Hazen and General J. D. Cox, and above all he despised volunteer or "political" generals. His recollections, written long after the events described, are tinged with biliousness throughout, and colored with subsequent impressions.

It so happens, however, that General Stanley himself has supplied an opinion directly counter to his own sweeping assertion of Garfield's total incompetence, in an article he wrote on the Tullahoma campaign. The conclusion is: "If any student of the military art desires to make a study of a model campaign, let him take his maps and General Rosecrans' orders for the daily movements in this campaign. No better example of successful strategy was carried out during the war than in the Tullahoma campaign."² Now as the evidence of Garfield's contemporary letters and journal shows and as Rosecrans's report indicates, not only were the actual orders from headquarters written by Garfield, but the whole campaign was worked out by him, the times fixed, the roads selected, the strategy elaborated (p. 305) and submitted to Rosecrans for approval and amendment. That is the busi-

¹ "Personal Memoirs," in *Military Historian and Economist*, 1917, p. 131.

² *Ohio Commandery, Loyal Legion, Sketches of War History*, Vol. III, p. 179.

ness of a competent chief of staff. In this case General Stanley unconsciously gave the highest praise to the man whom he subsequently stigmatized as "an 'Old Man of the Sea' on Rosecrans' shoulders" and "everlastingly meddling."¹ Of course, no one claims that such work as this entitles Garfield to the credit for the campaign. Rosecrans was perfectly able to make his own plans. What he wanted when he selected Garfield for chief of staff was a subordinate and colleague who could relieve him of the detail work in such planning and enable him to concentrate his mind on the main issues. Without doubt Garfield worked out the Chattanooga plans the same way. It was his duty, and he deserves no more credit for it than is due to a successful chief of staff.

Perhaps a severely critical study would reveal technical imperfections such as a volunteer officer must inevitably develop in such a situation; but no such study has ever been published of the campaigns of the Army of the Cumberland under Rosecrans and, failing such authoritative treatment, the best that can be said at the moment is that General Stanley's own language of 1887 about the Tullahoma campaign disposes of his later charges, and one is justified in thinking that General Garfield achieved in large degree the aims he set before himself in his letter of February 14. Such at all events is the opinion of his friend, General J. D. Cox: "No one has questioned the fact that Garfield's influence in his staff position was a good one, assisting his chief in maturing a wise plan of campaign, aiding in bringing the organization of the army to greater efficiency, systematizing the routine of so complicated a machine and finally in advocating action early and decisive." And finally, still more precisely, he adds, "No candid person can deny that Garfield's presence at the headquarters of the Army of the Cumberland was valuable in suggestion and criticism and that in plan and energy of execution the campaign of 1863 owed much to him."²

¹ "Personal Memoirs," in *Military Historian and Economist*, 1917, p. 158.

² Cox, "Early Life of James A. Garfield," in *Society of Army of Cumberland*, 1882, p. 104.

Thus Garfield's military career came to an end with personal credit and distinction, although the campaign and battle in which all his soul was embarked had broken down, and a new general had had to be called in to bring them to completion. Of course his record, if studied from the point of view of the modern highly elaborated art of war, would prove vulnerable enough in many directions. But if taken as an example of what an entirely untrained civilian could do when put into a position of great importance, it discloses a record of courage, energy and capacity to learn. Garfield had the fighting spirit. He was no routine soldier, satisfied with doing the "correct thing." Such an attitude would have been impossible to him, not merely because his standards were not those of professional officers, trained in routine, but because of his earnestness and eagerness of temperament. He was always ready to take chances, as shown in his Sandy valley campaign, his sending out Streight on his daring raid, his standing alone in urging the advance on Tullahoma, and still more strikingly in his urgency that the battle be fought out on the field of Chickamauga. When Rosecrans made his rash "pursuit" of Bragg, before finding out where the Confederate army actually had gone, Garfield appears to have shared his optimism and to have felt no dismay when he found that the "pursuit" had resulted in scattering the Union forces too widely, only eagerness to meet the situation as it developed. Undoubtedly he had much to learn when he left the army, but his whole record shows that he had the makings of a genuine commander in him. What he might have attained, had he chosen to continue in the army, one can only conjecture.

CHAPTER XI
CONGRESSIONAL BEGINNINGS, WAR
LEGISLATION
1863-1865

SINCE Garfield's entrance into Congress proved to be the beginning of his real life work, it will be advisable, before describing his course, to survey the nature of Congressional action, in order to realize the conditions under which he was destined to labor for nearly all the rest of his days. At the outset it should be realized that the business of being a Congressman had become by 1863 a highly technical affair. The House of Representatives had developed a complex system of rules controlling procedure, motions, committee action and voting, and had superposed on them a mass of tradition which strictly circumscribed the field open to any single member and made it necessary for the new-comer to win his way in a definitely prescribed manner.

When Garfield entered the House in December, 1863, he found it thoroughly controlled by a strong body of older men, who had already served several terms and, through seniority and experience, had made good their right to lead. Unquestionably the most powerful was the hard-fighting old man, Thaddeus Stevens of Pennsylvania, who had been in Congress fifteen years before, and had been pushing his way to the front since 1859. By virtue of his merciless tongue, his power in debate and readiness for drastic action, he held a unique place in the House. He was chairman of the Committee of Ways and Means, which was responsible for all the financial measures.

Associated with Stevens were men of a more or less aggressive type who had won positions of authority through long service and recognized ability. Such were Schuyler Colfax of Indiana, a member since 1855 and certain to be chosen speaker; J. S. Morrill of Vermont, now in his fifth term and

sharing with Stevens the burdens of the Ways and Means Committee; H. L. Dawes of Massachusetts, in his fourth term, chairman of the Committee on Elections; Elihu Washburne of Illinois; Henry Winter Davis of Maryland, and from Ohio, General Robert Schenck, who had had three terms as far back as Tyler's presidency, and now returned after two years in the army to assume the leadership which his age and experience warranted. These were the men under whom Garfield must serve and with whom he must measure himself if he was to achieve success.

Besides Garfield a number of Republicans entered the service at this time or in the preceding Congress who were destined to be his associates or rivals for many years. Such were G. S. Boutwell and Oakes Ames of Massachusetts and W. D. Kelley of Pennsylvania, later to be known as "Pig-iron" Kelley, the mouthpiece of the high protectionists as well as of the paper money inflationists. Still more closely connected with Garfield's future history was James G. Blaine of Maine, two years his senior, who now began his long public career.

Across the hall from these Republicans sat a group of unterrified and intensely bitter Democrats, elected in 1862 on the platform that the war was a failure and ought to be stopped. Conspicuous among the New York Democratic Congressmen was Fernando Wood, a leader of Tammany, just short of being a "boss" in the later sense, who had served in Congress a generation earlier and now returned to cast defiance in the teeth of the "abolitionists." Another was James Brooks, a veteran who had served two terms in the Taylor-Fillmore period, and who was destined to be a thorn in the side of Republican committeemen for ten years. From Ohio came George Pendleton and Samuel S. Cox,—known for many years as "Sunset Cox,"—a pair of the hardest Congressional opponents and critics that any Republican could hope to meet. Two others of equal pugnacity were D. W. Voorhees and W. S. Holman of Indiana, the former a hard-hitting debater, the latter a man destined to achieve fame as the "Watch-dog of the Treasury" from his pertinacity in detecting "jobs" or "raids" upon the treasury in

the form of seemingly harmless private bills or amendments to appropriation bills. From Pennsylvania in this Congress there came, to reinforce the Democratic leaders, a member with a very rough tongue and abrupt temper but undeniable ability, Samuel J. Randall.

How was the new member to make for himself a place beside these leaders? Not by brilliant speeches, although these would play their part, but by faithful performance of duty as second or understudy to the leader on whatever committee he might find himself. He must qualify by drafting bills, studying measures, speaking in behalf of them; and most of all by showing that he could conduct a bill through the House, making the proper motions and not getting caught in the elaborate and tricky rules. He must learn, that is, the technical method of playing the Congressional game, and must show the "elder statesman" that he could handle situations and secure favorable votes.

On matters outside his own committee measures the matter stood differently, for there the new member could make his mark only as a volunteer speaker or maker of motions. Caution and good judgment were demanded of the aspirant for Congressional prominence; for too frequent speaking or too inflated oratory might quickly tire the House,—an impatient body of listeners,—and many rash motions not in harmony with the sentiment either of the committee in charge of a pending measure or with the feeling of the majority in the House would quickly establish a reputation for annoying and futile independence. Blaine observed, years later, on this subject: "There is no test of a man's ability in any department of public life more severe than service in the House of Representatives; there is no place where so little deference is paid to reputation previously acquired, or to eminence won outside; no place where so little consideration is shown for the feelings or the failures of beginners. What a man gains in the House, he gains by sheer force of his own character, and if he loses and falls back he must expect no mercy and will receive no sympathy."¹

¹ "Eulogy," in Sen. Misc. Doc. No. 123, 47 Cong., 1 sess., pp. 24-25.

Fully to trace the steps by which Garfield established a position for himself in this and later sessions would be a laborious and highly technical matter. Indeed, it is doubtful whether anybody but a specialist in parliamentary law and customs could do justice to such a subject. All that can fairly be done within the limits of a biographical study is to note the general character of his career and the way in which he himself viewed it, as shown in his letters and journals.

As compared with many members Garfield could count on important advantages from the start. He had served in a state legislature; he had had two years in the army and had just won promotion; he was personally acceptable to Chase, the Secretary of the Treasury, and he was known to have left the army and entered Congress at the request of Lincoln with the special purpose of using his knowledge of military needs to further military legislation. It was certain that he would be placed on the Committee on Military Affairs, which meant a chance for conspicuous service, for on no committee, at this crisis of the war, would more important and difficult duties be placed.

Everyone now realized that the contest with the Confederacy was entering a stage where general tenacity and endurance rather than single military victories would determine the outcome. The war had become a matter of holding out. It was true that during 1863 the military situation had turned more and more in favor of the North, but the South was not yet defeated. Its main armies were still intact and it would certainly take more severe campaigning to bring the end of the war definitely in sight.

For the Thirty-eighth Congress, the principal business must be the keeping up of the armies in the field, in order that by merciless, unremitting pressure the Southern armies might be worn down. To this all other matters were subsidiary—the raising of money, the maintaining of government credit, even the contest against secret and open opposition to the war, now widespread in the northern states. Public feeling was already showing unmistakable signs of exhaustion and war-weariness; the faint-hearted were beginning to talk of accepting defeat; the nervous and irritable

were ready to turn savagely upon the Washington administration and the political leaders in the states. Never did Congressional leaders face a harder task than the Republicans who, in the session of 1863-1864 undertook to govern and at the same time to hold steady the morale and the courage of their constituents during the ordeal that lay before them.

Into this situation Garfield threw himself with all the energy of his nature, regardless of his youth and Congressional newness, determined to direct every atom of influence he could exercise in favor of the unflinching prosecution of the war. A major general, fresh from the battlefield, he stepped at once into the councils of the Republicans, as shown in his first letter home (December 9): "I reached here just in time to attend the caucus where we selected Mr. Colfax of Indiana as our candidate for speaker. Today I have resigned my commission in the army and am now for the first time since Aug. 12, 1861 a citizen. . . . There is some prospect of a difficulty in organizing the House and the members have been advised to go there armed tomorrow. I don't think there is any real danger, though some think there is. I was appointed one of a committee of five to manage the matter, and the other members of the caucus promised to sustain us in any measure we deemed it necessary to take. The other members of the Committee were Thaddeus Stevens of Pa., H. Winter Davis of Md., H. L. Dawes of Mass. and ——— of Me. We have planned a small campaign which has a fight as one of its remote contingencies but, I trust very remote."

The House organized without difficulty December 7, and Garfield was immediately appointed to a place on the Committee on Military Affairs, with General Robert Schenck, also of Ohio, as chairman. He was at once set to work, his letters showing the intense eagerness with which he threw himself into his new duties and labors. "I have been chosen by the Military Committee," he wrote his wife (December 21), "to overhaul the conscription law and draft a new one. I have worked on it incessantly since last Friday, sitting up one night till four o'clock. I must try to be a little more

temperate, if possible, though I scarcely know how to be. My long absence from political life has left me sadly behind in all current political learning and I must make up for it by hard work." On January 17 he was able to write, "I have finished my draft of the conscription bill and am now reading up for its defense," and finally, in February, the contest began.

It was interesting to see that the chief difficulty was met with from Republicans, who, while anxious to pursue the war, were still more anxious to make it possible for their constituents to evade being drafted. Schenck and Garfield found their hands full. "The conscription hangs fire in the House," wrote Garfield to Hinsdale (February 10), "the Democrats doing all in their power to delay and finally to kill it. Old Thad is stubborn and meddlesome and quite foolishly mad because he can't lead this House by the nose as has been his custom hitherto." The newcomer's inexperience led him into difficulties with the rules, when he took charge of the bill, but he was set right by Schenck, his chairman, and the bill was finally passed by the House February 12, becoming law on the twenty-fourth. Garfield might feel that he had taken a successful first step.

But before this time Garfield had also made himself conspicuous by several striking exhibitions of independence in setting himself squarely against the temper of the House. On January 6, after speaking against a proposal to extend the system of bounties for volunteering until March 1, he voted absolutely alone in the negative, being joined before the vote was announced by one supporter. "I am satisfied," he wrote to Austin (January 30), "that my vote on bounties was a wise one. If we continue that system, our finances will go to ruin; many of our best men are now satisfied that I was right. Secretary Chase says I will have reason to be proud of that vote hereafter. But of course I may be wrong." On February 1 he again showed his independence and also the persistence of his old *esprit de corps* as an officer in the Army of the Cumberland, by speaking and voting with a small minority against the bill to restore the grade of lieutenant general and against the resolution endorsing Grant

for that place. In such conduct his friend Chase detected a lack of worldly wisdom and so he gave him a little advice, as reported by Garfield. "Now," he said, "Garfield, you have just started in public life. I was proud of your vote the other day. You were right, but I want you to bear in mind, that it is a very risky thing to vote against your whole party. It is a good thing to do it sparingly, but you must not do it often. Do it carefully."¹

It took Garfield some time to appreciate the soundness of Chase's advice, and both in this session and the following ones he continued to show a tendency to defy the House from time to time, occasionally with disastrous results. On February 17 he set himself against the current with some success when he opposed a resolution sent down from the Senate thanking "Major General Thomas and the officers and men who fought under his command at Chickamauga for their gallantry good conduct and soldierly endurance." Garfield moved as an amendment to insert the name of General Rosecrans, supporting this with a brief and very vigorous speech in which the desire to protect his old commander from a public slight was visibly aided by the fact that in defending him he was also defending himself. His eagerness to prove that Chickamauga was not in essence a defeat arose from his own sharp memories of days and nights of hard work with maps and dispatch books. He carried the reference of the resolution to his committee, reported it back with the amendment and secured its passage by the House, but when it reached the Senate it was referred to the Senate committee and there pigeonholed.

A similar fate was encountered by the next important measure with which Garfield was connected, one that deserves attention because of the important problem it foreshadowed. The situation was, in brief, that the State of New Jersey, having granted a monopoly of all transportation across the state to one railroad, took legal steps to prevent a second railroad from carrying any troops or supplies from New York to Philadelphia in the very crisis of the war. When it was proposed to have Congress declare the second railroad

¹ MS. Biographical Notes, 1880.

a "military road and post-road," thereby legalizing through traffic, the New Jersey members, backed by the state government, resisted it as an infringement of the "sovereignty" of the state.

Garfield's handling of the subject showed his power of speaking in a less ornate and much more effective manner than had hitherto been his custom. In particular he employed sarcasm at the expense of the bluster about states rights, and showed the outrageousness of the claim of New Jersey to maintain a profitable monopoly which paid the state's expenses at the cost of the rest of the eastern states and the national government. In closing he pointed out that the message of the governor announced the purpose of the state to "resist the legislation here proposed. This itself," he said, "is another reason why I ask this Congress to exercise its right and thus rebuke this spirit of nullification. The gentleman tells us that New Jersey is a loyal state and thousands of her citizens are in the army. I am proud of all the citizens of New Jersey who are fighting in our army. They are not fighting for New Jersey, nor for the Camden and Amboy monopoly but for the union as against the nullification or rebellion of any state. . . . We have used this power hitherto, but we have never before been called upon to exercise it in any case so deserving as that which gave rise to this bill."¹ It passed the House but went no further.

So far Garfield had found it a simple matter to play the part of a reforming legislator, voting for or against measures purely on the basis of his personal opinion of their merits. But in April and May another problem arose in the Committee on Military Affairs which compelled him to take Chase's advice to heart and decide squarely whether to continue to follow his individual views or to aim at securing results. An agitation in behalf of putting negro soldiers on full equality of pay with white soldiers was vigorous on the Western Reserve and Garfield now found himself assailed in northern Ohio for being insufficiently radical in this respect. The time now came when Garfield had to choose between taking what he could get or fighting anything less

¹ Hinsdale, *Works of James A. Garfield*, Vol. I, p. 59.

than what he considered ideal justice. In other words, it was the choice inevitably presented to a reformer,—should he preserve his own consistency and win the applause of like-minded people, or should he accept the best obtainable and incur their scorn as a “mere compromiser”? He chose the latter alternative and when the bill was reported from a conference committee, May 25, he frankly said: “When this measure was before the House, I did all that I honorably could to procure the passage of the bill in the shape I desired, but since I have become satisfied that we could not carry out our desire, I have been in favor of making some concession to the other branch of Congress for the sake of getting as near it as we could.”¹

Finding himself under a sharp fire from the radical anti-slavery elements in his district, Garfield wrote in June to W. C. Howells of the Ashtabula *Sentinel*, explaining again carefully and with punctilious clearness the precise question on which he voted and the principles which determined his vote. Since these were the same that governed him from the beginning to the end of his political life it is well to quote them at this stage (June 18). He had voted regularly for equal pay for all negro soldiers, but when the compromise between Senate and House amendments was presented, by which some negro troops received it and some did not, he decided to vote for it. “I was satisfied with the report,” he said, “as the best we could get and, in view of the great embarrassments of the Treasury, I thought probably as far as we ought to go.” But a large number of radicals voted against it, as did the Democrats, and the result was that the House had to agree to the much less satisfactory compromise of leaving it all to the decision of the Attorney-General. “I told them,” said Garfield, “all the time we should never get it in so good a shape again and the event has proved that I was right. . . . I only desire,” he concluded, “to use a wise discretion and not lose a practical good for a remote possibility of something better.”

As the spring came on and with it the terrible hammering campaign of Grant against Lee, Garfield’s soul was severely

¹ *Cong. Globe*, 38 Cong., 1 sess., p. 2472.

torn by a sense of his possible duty to return to the field. On April 24 he wrote, after visiting the Army of the Potomac with ex-Governor Dennison, and seeing "Gen. Sheridan lately of the Army of the Cumberland, now chief of cavalry under Grant. The elements are rapidly preparing and there must very soon be a terrible struggle between Lee and Grant. I cannot tell you how hard a trial it was for me to see the army ready to move and think of me quietly remaining behind. It stirred all the quick blood of my heart. You need not be greatly surprised if I go to the field again." In May his sense of tension increased. On May 8 he said: "If disaster befalls us and I am really needed I am sure you will do as you have so nobly done before, cheerfully give me to the country. We are waiting with suspended breath for the issue of the great struggle going on just beyond the reach of our ears. The long train of wounded is beginning to pour into the city. We have steadily gained thus far and if Grant is completely successful in crushing Lee the rebellion is substantially ended."

But the next time he wrote he was still more disturbed, for the frightful losses from the fighting in the Wilderness were filling Washington with consternation. "I am greatly tried," he wrote (May 12), "by the question of my duty to the country in this hour of great trial. Many of our bravest and best officers have fallen in the battles between here and Richmond and I have for several days been feeling that I have hardly the right to hold back from the country the success and experience I had in the service. . . . If Grant should be thoroughly successful—and God grant he may—it may not be necessary, but if we should have disaster and my services could fill a gap in the ranks I don't think I ought to stand back."

On May 18 he wrote to his wife that the "cheering success of Grant" rendered it unlikely that he should go back to the army again. "I do hope," he continued, "that the rebel power in Va. will soon be broken. Nearly 25,000 fresh troops have been sent to Grant since his battles began and they are still pouring forward. . . . It is a tearful place here now. While the thousands of fresh troops go out to feed the great

battle mills the crushed grain comes in. Over twelve thousand wounded have already arrived here. When the good old President [Hopkins] came here three mornings ago seeking for his wounded son, he was a noble picture of heroic grief. It was a great pleasure to be able to aid him as I did."

At the end of the session, under the depression produced by the terrible losses of the Virginia campaign a new conscription law became necessary. As Garfield described the situation, in some reminiscences, many years later, it was a tragic moment. "Mr. Lincoln came to the committee," he said,¹ "and told us what we did not dare to tell the House, that in so many months, not far ahead, 380,000 would have their term expire. . . . 'Now,' he said, 'unless I can replace those men we not only cannot push this Rebellion but we cannot stay where we are . . . and I ask you to give me the power to draft men to fill the ranks.' His Republican friends expostulated with him and said that . . . the country would not stand it; it would raise a storm and the Democracy would carry the country. Mr. Lincoln raised himself up to his full height and said 'It is not necessary for me to be re-elected, but it is necessary for me to put down this Rebellion. You give me that law and I will put it down before my successor takes his seat.'"

The Military Committee brought in the bill, but the House, by a vote of two to one, struck out the clause abolishing commutation, thereby restoring the practice which, in military opinion, would ruin the army. Garfield at this point broke out in an impassioned speech denouncing the vote just taken as a vote to abandon the war, and, as he said, made himself very unpopular with timid colleagues who feared the anger of their constituents. Trying to appeal to their pride he cried out:² "Let us at least learn from our enemies. I have seen their gallantry in battle, their hoping against hope amid increasing disaster, and traitors though they are, I am proud of their splendid courage when I remember that they are Americans. Our Army is equally brave but our Government and Congress are far behind them in

¹ Biographical Notes, 1880.

² *Cong. Globe*, 38 Cong., 1 sess., p. 3271.

earnestness and energy. Until we go into the war with the same desperation and abandonment which mark their course we do not deserve to succeed and we shall not succeed. What have they done? . . . They have not only drafted but cut off both commutation and substitution. . . . But we stand here bartering blood for money, debating whether we will fight the enemies of the nation or pay \$300 into the Treasury. Let us hold up the hands of the President and remove this obstacle from the law as he recommends. . . . I have learned that the people are braver than their Representatives. I would sooner take the counsel of the American people and especially of the American army than of the timidity of the Representatives when an election is at hand."

The last days of the session were an almost continuous struggle to get the bill through, but the majority of the House finally reversed its first vote and the bill was passed with the commutation clause struck out. Garfield made the last report from the Conference Committee, July 2, which was accepted 65 to 53. In this contest once more Garfield's readiness to challenge the temper of the House was manifest, and with the army, the administration and the Senate on his side he scored a success, for himself as well as for his committee. He also ran the risk of injuring himself with his own constituents, as he was quick to learn from angry newspaper comments and savage letters. The *Youngstown Courier* remarked June 6: "General Garfield's views as to drafted men are extraordinary. He does not seem disposed to grant them any privileges or extend to them any compassion."

In the next session he again stirred up anger in his district by advocating and carrying a clause in the final enrollment bill, compelling volunteers to enlist from their own districts and not go where they could get the highest bounties. He wrote to Austin (March 24) that he had been told of "a paper in circulation for signatures . . . requesting me to resign. I am not at all disturbed by this ebullition of rage, for I know that time will vindicate my course, just as it did last winter on the subject of repealing the commutation clause. If any man can see any justice in allowing one town-

ship to take its enrolled men from another and leave that other to bear the full burden besides, he has been reared in a different school from what I have been."

While Garfield did his full duty on military matters, his main interests lay, as did those of the whole country, in the complicated political questions which divided the North, not only between Republicans and "Copperheads," but between differing factions of the Union party. For several weeks he did no more than vote in silence against the constant succession of peace resolutions which the "Copperheads" brought forward, but by the end of January he felt the time had come to show his colors. In the debate on a confiscation bill he took the floor to deliver a formal speech, his first one of that sort, devoting a large part of it to the exposition of his views on secession. Drawing a sharp distinction between his position and that of Stevens, he refused to admit that the Southern States had actually put themselves out of the Union. On the other hand he declined to regard them as still members of it with their rights unimpaired, as the Democrats insisted. "I claim on the contrary," he said, "that the obligations of the Constitution still hang over them; but by their own act of rebellion they have cut themselves off from their rights and privileges under the Constitution." This was the position later adopted by Congress and long afterwards by the Supreme Court.

Quite as interesting was the turn he gave to the last part of the speech, which was an urgent plea for severe, merciless prosecution of the war, the extirpation of slavery and the destruction of the social aristocracy based upon it. At one point he frankly admitted his own change of mind. "I remember to have said to a friend when I entered the Army," he remarked,¹ "'You hate slavery; so do I, but I hate disunion more. Let us drop the slavery question and fight to sustain the union.' . . . I started out with that position taken in good faith, as did thousands of others of all parties, but the Army soon found, do what it would, the black phantom would meet it everywhere, in the camp, in the bivouac, in the battle-field and at all times. . . . The practical truth

¹ *Cong. Globe*, 38 Cong., 1 sess., p. 404.

forced itself upon the mind of every soldier that behind the rebel army of soldiers the black army of laborers was feeding and sustaining the rebellion and there could be no victory until its main support was taken away. . . . They have been where they have seen its baleful effects upon the country and the Union and they demand that it shall be swept away."

At the end he turned upon the Copperheads and denounced their dealings with the Army of the Cumberland, describing with telling effect the cheers that went up at Chattanooga when the news arrived of the defeat of Vandaligham in the Ohio election. "There arose a shout all along the line on that rainy midnight from every tent, which rent the skies with jubilees, and sent despair to the heart of those men beyond our lines who were waiting and watching across the border."¹

This speech was sound and well organized, but it lacked the emotional quality which attracted attention in those days of bitterness and excitement. Later in the session Garfield, under the spur of indignation, uttered a speech which achieved the kind of success that was appropriate to the times. On April 8 in a letter to his wife Garfield described the occurrence: "I have just returned from the House where a singular scene has transpired. Long, of Cincinnati, made an elaborate speech of an hour and a half arguing the right of secession and coming out boldly in favor of recognizing the Southern Confederacy. He denounced the plan of attempting to restore the union as useless and wrong. It seemed necessary that such atrocious utterances should be answered and denounced and as no one else appeared to be ready to do it, I did. Feeling the outrage on the country generally, and especially on the State of Ohio I said to him and of him and his party what was in my heart. I think in some respects it was the best effort of my life."

The "reply to Long," as Garfield's first speech to gain general applause, deserves some notice, even though Hinsdale omitted it from the edition of Garfield's speeches. It was very emotional, rather rambling and at times almost

¹ *Works of James A. Garfield*, Vol. I, pp. 3-17.

incoherent. He had not yet learned the art of hitting hard in a brief space. A few quotations will show the style of eloquence then at his command. He began by drawing a contrast between Lord Fairfax, the honorable Royalist in the Revolution, and Arnold, who "deep down in the damned pits of his black heart hatched the treason that was to surrender forever all that had been gained to the enemies of his country." Likening Lee to Fairfax he compared Long (without naming him) to Arnold, and cried out "now when the uplifted hand of a majestic people is about to let fall the lightning of its conquering power upon the rebellion; now . . . there rises a Benedict Arnold and proposes to surrender us all up, the nation and the flag, to the accursed traitors to our country. . . . I implore you, brethren in this House, not to believe that many such births ever gave pangs to my mother State as she suffered when that traitor was born. (Suppressed applause and sensation.) I beg you not to believe that on the soil of that state such another growth has ever deformed the face of nature and darkened the light of God's day." (An audible whisper, 'Vallandigham.') Such a speech not only held the attention of the House but was commented on in many newspapers and drew forth approving personal letters. It could not fail to strengthen Garfield's position with his party.

Fully as marked as his unionism was his emphatic sympathy with the antagonism felt toward Lincoln by the great majority of Republicans. In large part, no doubt, this was due to the influence of Chase, still strong over him. "I hope we may not be compelled to push him [Lincoln] four years more," he observed in a letter (February 11). But he was far too clear-sighted to imagine that Chase himself stood any chance of replacing Lincoln as the party candidate. When the Pomeroy circular came out, February 22, advocating Chase as a Union candidate in place of Lincoln, he regretted the move. "It seems clear to me," he wrote to a constituent (February 25), "that the people desire the reelection of Mr. Lincoln and I believe any movement in any other direction will not only be a failure but will tend to

¹ *Cong. Globe*, 38 Cong., 1 sess., p. 1503.

disturb and embarrass the unity of the friends of the Union. . . . The administration is not all I could wish but it would be a national calamity to alienate the radical element from Mr. Lincoln and leave him to the support of the Blair and Thurlow Weed school of politicians." To Harmon Austin he said (March 4), "He will probably be the man, though I think we could do better. But I have had nothing to do in the matter except that I told Mr Chase I thought he ought to withdraw from a contest when he had no hope of success and could only distract the party."

But in April an exasperating episode stung Garfield out of this philosophical attitude and led him to write a wrathful letter to Rhodes (April 28) which deserves quotation at some length as an illustration of the political undercurrents in Washington at that time. "The conviction is rapidly fastening on my mind . . . that two things appear to be certain. 1st that Mr. Lincoln will be nominated—2nd that he will be defeated and a Copperhead elected. I don't know a dozen men who believe it can be otherwise. . . . None but a blind man can fail to see the painful lack of bold and vigorous administration and now, in the midst of all, there has occurred an event which Congress cannot pass by in silence without surrendering its independence. . . . On Saturday last Blair came into the House, his father and sister in the gallery to cheer him, and for one hour made the most shameful and abusive speech against Mr. Chase which has been uttered by any man this session. He charged Chase with official corruption of the worst sort, and charged the whole Republican party with trying to cover up his corruption. That same day he was assigned to the command of an Army Corps in the West, by the President. Worst of all the President says he privately promised Blair that he would hold his resignation in abeyance till he wanted to go back into the army, leaving us to draw no other conclusion [than] that his creature was sent here for a special purpose which when accomplished, he puts him back in his place, thus ratifying all he said and did while here.

"If there has been so flagrant an outrage against the rights of the Senate and the House, against the Constitution

and the Army, against the men who put him in power and against one of his own Cabinet—— The resignation of Mr. Chase at this time would be as great a calamity as the defeat of Grant and yet I don't see how he can do otherwise. It hangs in the balance whether he will or not. . . . We are on the brink of the most fearful precipice. . . . The President is bound hand and foot by the Blairs and they are dragging him and the country down the chasm."

Garfield promptly came to the defense of his friend and patron and carried a resolution for the investigation of the alleged frauds and immoralities by a special committee of which he was made chairman, April 30. A month later he wrote (May 28): "I am giving from four to six hours a day to the Chase investigation. It is a most gross outrage that the President should so insult him and violate the constitution to do it. I hope the people of Ohio will appreciate it. I shall try to make them do so." The report of the committee, June 30, dwelt fully on two points only; the government printing of financial papers, bonds, and notes, and the alleged immoralities among Treasury employees. Nothing was proved, of course, that in any way involved Chase, and the report of the majority wholly exonerated the Treasury Department from all the charges, while the minority considered them proved and accused Garfield of whitewashing. By that time, however, Chase himself had resigned from the Cabinet and the incident was forgotten.¹

It may be added that Garfield, in spite of his low opinion of Lincoln, attended the convention which renominated him, although more by accident than intention. On his way to Ohio he was detained in Baltimore and reported to his wife (June 6): "The delegation from Ohio insisted that I should stay tomorrow. I find they think if I go home now it will look like an intentional slight to the convention and I don't want to make any unnecessary quarrel with my friends in the matter."

When Congress adjourned, July 4, Garfield returned to Ohio to face a contest for his own renomination. What he thought of his work in this, his first session, has not been

¹ *House Reports*, No. 140, 38 Cong., 1 sess.

preserved in any letter—that is, as a final summing up. Whitelaw Reid¹ said: “In Congress General Garfield at once took high rank. He soon became known as a powerful speaker, remarkably ready and always effective in debate. Especially through his reply to Long did he gain a standing which he never lost.” In following through the *Congressional Globe*, one gains the impression that he succeeded in making himself felt almost from the start, and in the committee matters which were his principal test he made a creditable and courageous showing. At the same time, he still had much to learn in the technical details of Congressional action.

It was upon his record in this session that his renomination depended, for his long absence from Ohio had left him with relatively few personal connections in his district; and the first difficulty he had to meet concerned his failure to satisfy the radical antislavery elements. It was true that he had voted on June 15 for the Thirteenth Amendment, abolishing slavery, when it failed to gain the requisite two-thirds, but that was not enough. His course on the pay of negro soldiers was considered to be unsatisfactory, and, what was considered still more offensive, he was said to have been an ardent supporter of the Reconstruction Bill which Lincoln had killed by a “pocket veto” and to have sympathized with the violent attack upon Lincoln published by Wade and Davis on August 5. The rumor even ran round the district that Garfield had had a hand in writing the manifesto.² When the Congressional nominating convention met at Warren, on August 23, “a committee was appointed to invite General Garfield to address the meeting,” it being understood that his renomination hinged upon his being able to satisfy his suspicious and angry constituents.

Thereupon the young Congressman marched on the stage and delivered what his wife called “the bravest speech in his life.” As reproduced in the newspaper report, the decisive passages ran: “I have been informed that rumors of a false character have recently been circulated in regard to my position in reference to the Wade and Davis protest. It has

¹ *Ohio in the War*, Vol. I, p. 758.

² A. G. Riddle, *History of Lake and Geauga Counties*, p. 106.

been said that I am a party to that protest. To this I have to say that I did not know of such a protest till it was issued." He added that he thought the protest ill-timed, but followed these defensive statements by a defiant declaration. "Abraham Lincoln was not my first choice. I made no factious opposition however to his nomination at Baltimore. . . . I hold it to be my privilege under the Constitution and as a man to criticize any acts of the President of the United States. I cannot go to Congress as your representative with my liberty restricted in this respect in any degree. *If I go to Congress I must go as a free man.* (Cheers.) I cannot go otherwise and when you are unwilling to grant me my freedom of opinion to the highest degree I have no longer a desire to represent you." "At the conclusion of General Garfield's remarks the whole convention broke out into enthusiastic cheers, showing that the bold and manly avowals of the speaker had received the cordial approval of the delegates of the Nineteenth District."¹ The convention immediately renominated him by acclamation, having passed a resolution condemning Wade and Davis.

After this dramatic triumph Garfield stumped the state with tireless vigor, boldly invading Democratic regions. He wrote to his wife from Holmes County: "I was told it would not be prudent to say anything very severe against them, nor against Vallandigham, who is esteemed a saint among them. Sundry small cowards passed word around that if that abolition speaker called them cowards, copperheads, or traitors he would get a stone and sundry other pleasant donations. In order to test the metal of these people I opened my speech by announcing that I should review the speech of the traitor for whose shipment through the lines I wrote the order and I was in hopes the Copperhead followers of Val were present to hear what I should say. I should treat them fairly, calling things by their right names and as to resistance I was quite sure that their desire of [for] personal safety was stronger than any belligerent feelings they might entertain. There was a little murmur on the outskirts of the

¹ *Ashtabula Sentinel*, August 24, 1864.

crowd and sundry beckonings and whisperings but they very soon subsided.

"And now behold how Bellona preserved me! While I was at the hotel a Mr. Weston came there to show me a knapsack and cartridge box he had invented and wanted my opinion of it. While we were examining it several of the cartridges were broken open and the powder spilled on the bed where the box lay. While I was at dinner some Copperheads went into the room and saw the powder and it was soon circulated through the crowd that Garfield and his company were armed and had loaded their revolvers before leaving the Hotel. This aided powerfully in securing the respectful attention [of] my audience and no word of disturbance occurred. . . . I spoke two hours and a half and the people received my speech and the rain with patriotic patience."

Garfield's majority was considerably increased in this election, for the Republican or Union vote swelled in every county, while the Democratic vote fell off in every county but one. In Geauga County it nearly disappeared. Added to the stay-at-home vote were ballots cast by soldiers of Ohio regiments in the field and these, as was to be expected, were almost unanimously Republican. The total figures were as follows:

	Garfield	Moses
Ashtabula	5,268	877
Gauga	2,603	123
Mahoning	2,681	1,992
Portage	3,153	1,714
Trumbull	4,381	1,609
	18,086	6,315

The situation which confronted Congress when it met in December, 1864, was very different from that which had prevailed the preceding year. Lee's army was tightly held in Richmond and Petersburg and the valley of Virginia was freed from Confederates; while Hood's army at this very time, December 15, was practically annihilated by Thomas at Nashville, and Sherman's march of destruction through

Georgia reached its triumphant conclusion with the entrance into Savannah on December 24. Everywhere the Southern Confederacy was crumbling, and one more campaign, under Grant, Sherman and Thomas, ought to end the struggle. At the North the victory of Lincoln in the election and especially the largely increased Union majorities in the next House and Senate marked the definite failure of the peace party and the practical commitment of the Republicans and the country to the policy of ending the slavery question by passing the proposed Thirteenth Amendment.

On political and slavery matters Garfield continued his policy of voting with his party, his name being regularly recorded with the majority on nearly every important resolution or bill of the session, and he continued to be impatient, if not contemptuous, toward Lincoln's conciliatory attitude toward the South. On the Hampton Roads conference which Lincoln and Seward held February 1 with Stephens and sundry other Confederate "Commissioners," he made this comment in a letter (February 5) to Hinsdale: "The Peace bubble has burst and the President, after tagging his premier a hundred miles to talk with three subordinates of Jeff Davis, has got back to tell us the end of his fool's errand. Even Fernando Wood now agrees that we must conquer peace. Some good will result from the matter after all."

As usual he made one conspicuous speech for "record" purposes, in the debate on the pending Thirteenth Amendment. Pendleton of Ohio, perhaps the foremost Copperhead after Vallandigham, made an argument on January 11 which adopted the traditional Calhoun conception of slavery as something wholly beyond reach even by constitutional amendment; a reserved right of the states too sacred to be overridden in any legal way. To this Garfield delivered a reply, January 13, which was largely *ex tempore* and, like his reply to Long of the preceding year, smacked somewhat of the literary standards of the fifties. Read today it seems excessively florid and crammed with literary allusions. He began with a quotation from Sallust, continued with another from Virgil, added phrases and sentences from the Bible, while toward the end he quoted Shakespeare. But under

these trimmings was a well-arranged presentation of the Websterian theory of the Constitution and the national sovereignty behind it, by virtue of which the institution of slavery could be legally abolished.¹

As a fitting conclusion to one question raised for Garfield in this Congress, an utterance of his may well be quoted in part. This was an open letter, dated April 7, to a group of his constituents who had sent him a letter severely criticising his votes and utterances on the draft quota arrangement and suggesting that as he did not represent the feelings of his constituents he would do well to resign. In Garfield's reply he set forth, once for all, his theory of the proper relations of a representative to his constituency, taking a position from which in later years he never varied, under any conceivable pressure. "I believe a representative should get all the light on every matter of public importance that his position enables him to and then speak and vote in such a manner as will, in his judgment, enhance the best interests of his constituents and the whole country. If the constituency, in reviewing the action of their representative, find him deficient in ability, judgment or integrity they have always the remedy of choosing another in his place. But while he is in office his course should be guided by his own judgments, based upon the suggestions of his constituents and all other attainable information. On no other ground could I have accepted the office I now hold, on no other ground could I continue to hold it. Please allow this letter to be read by each signer of yours. If you choose to publish them both you are at liberty to do so."

On the very day that he wrote this letter, Lee's exhausted columns were struggling westward, harassed by the merciless Sheridan and his cavalry, and two days later, at Appomattox, the Confederate commander, realizing that the end had come, surrendered the remnants of his once invincible army. The war was virtually over. But five days later, on April 15, came the stunning blow of Lincoln's assassination. When this took place Garfield happened to be in New York on business and as was the case with many men who had been

¹ *Works of James A. Garfield*, Vol. I, p. 73.

impatient with Lincoln, and underrated his strength and wisdom, he seems to have been instantly shocked out of that attitude. He wrote to his wife (April 17): "My heart is so broken with our great national loss that I can hardly think or write or speak. I reached here Friday night at midnight and in the morning heard the shocking news. . . . Places of business have been closed. Nothing is in the heart of anyone but great sorrow. . . . The day is nearly gone and I have as yet done nothing. I am sick at heart and feel it to be almost like a sacrilege to talk of money or business now."

But Garfield did more than merely sit sorrowing. He uttered on this occasion a few brief words in public which are among the most famous ever uttered by him and are among those that have passed into tradition in connection with the national sorrow and excitement over the assassination. As told in the campaign biographies of 1880, he succeeded, when other prominent men had failed, in calming an excited crowd and preventing a possibly dangerous riot against Copperheads by stepping forward on the evening of April 17 and making the following brief address, put together wholly out of grave and eloquent phrases from the old Testament: "Fellow-citizens! Clouds and darkness are round about Him! His pavilion is dark waters and thick clouds of the skies! Justice and judgment are the habitation of His throne! Mercy and truth shall go before his face! Fellow-citizens! God reigns and the government at Washington still lives."

In later times the last sentence was criticised as being an anticlimax, but such a comment overlooks the emotional circumstances. The "government at Washington" was for Garfield and those who heard him the symbol of the national existence, the thing they had fought and suffered four years to preserve.

The tradition of this speech was so well established during Garfield's own lifetime as to become a familiar commonplace, yet it is a curious fact that no clipping of it exists among Garfield's papers, nor did Garfield himself, so far as known, refer to it in later times. It is also true that other versions of a speech made by him in New York are to be found, none

of which contains the biblical imagery or the famous last sentence.

With the collapse of Southern resistance it became necessary to consider the problems of returning to a peace status, as to the currency, the debt and peace taxation, but, above all, as to the reestablishment of loyal governments in the conquered states. Such matters unquestionably called for legislation, but Andrew Johnson, who stepped into the presidency upon Lincoln's assassination, preferred to deal with everything within his reach through executive action and did not summon Congress in advance of its regular time of meeting in December, 1865. In the intervening eight months he used his executive discretion to terminate war conditions in the government, and, what was more striking, he undertook to carry through the restoration of "loyal" state governments in the South by appointing military governors, who supervised, aided and directed the process. All during the summer and autumn this program was going on, to the perplexity and disquiet of millions of Northerners. For the negroes, Johnson did nothing except to put pressure on the new Southern governments to accept emancipation and ratify the pending Thirteenth Amendment. This they did, with the result that, on December 18, 1865, it was proclaimed by Seward, Secretary of State, as part of the Constitution. Slavery was abolished.

Garfield's attitude during this period was that of the more radical Northerners, not ready openly to oppose Johnson but convinced that his policy offered no solution to the negro problem. In a fourth of July speech at Ravenna, he took occasion to set forth his views, boldly declaring that nothing less than giving the ballot to the negroes would serve as a means for protecting their rights. In taking this position Garfield had too much candor to avoid facing the difficulties involved, and tried to meet the issue. "It will be asked," he said,¹ "is it safe to admit to the elective franchise the great mass of ignorant and degraded blacks, so lately slaves? . . . I am fully persuaded that some degree of intelligence and culture should be required as a qualification of suffrage, but

¹ *Works of James A. Garfield*, Vol. I, p. 87.

let it apply to all alike. Let us not commit ourselves to the senseless and absurd dogma that the color of the skin shall be the basis of suffrage, the talisman of liberty. I admit that it is perilous to confer the franchise upon the ignorant and degraded; but if an educational test cannot be established, let suffrage be extended to all men of proper age regardless of color. It may well be questioned whether the negro does not understand the nature of our institutions better than the equally ignorant foreigner. . . . Shall we now be guilty of the unutterable meanness . . . of committing his destiny to the tender mercies of those pardoned rebels who have been so reluctantly compelled to take their feet from his neck and their hands from his throat? . . . If they are to be disfranchised, if they are to have no voice in determining the conditions under which they are to live and labor, what hope have they for the future?" He then dwelt upon the political effect of emancipation in adding members of the House to the late Confederate states and concluded with a strong appeal to his hearers' sense of justice.

Without much doubt Garfield at this time stood in advance of the general sentiment of the North, and even of his own state. This he discovered to his chagrin when the Republican state convention failed entirely to take his ground, and, worse than that, his old-time friend, General J. D. Cox, now candidate for governor on the Republican ticket, came out in July with an open letter strongly opposing negro suffrage. Still further, in a private letter to Garfield, Cox took the ground that black and white races were incompatible and talked of segregation of the negroes in certain states. Garfield at once wrote urging him not to push these views in the campaign. "I believe we should take the ground in the coming campaign that it is too early to reorganize any of the rebel states and that they shall be held under military rule until we are sure there is a voting population that realizes the wickedness of the rebellion and can be trusted with power. This position can be most strongly fortified by the facts now being developed in . . . nearly all of them, and we can postpone both the suffrage and separation question till Congress meets." About a week later Garfield wrote to his

wife, "I have a letter from Cox agreeing to take the position I suggested in the campaign," but still, as he remarked to Austin, "the issues are in very bad shape."

Garfield started in on the stump in Mahoning County on August 30, but after a few weeks he was forced to withdraw as the result of a badly sprained ankle. Still worrying over the future, he wrote to Chase (October 4): "I am anxious to know whether the friends of union are to be greeted with peace or war when Congress assembles. The weak and timid course of our party in Ohio has made me more reconciled to the accident which has kept me out of the campaign than I otherwise would have been. If we shall not be able to maintain the fight on the suffrage question alone, should we not make a preliminary resistance to immediate restoration and thus gain time?"

In spite of Garfield's gloomy comments the Republican party carried the state without difficulty by a larger majority than they were destined to enjoy for many years thereafter. The tide of war-time loyalty was still running sufficiently strongly to carry with it the mass of the voters.

Cox (Republican)	Morgan (Democratic)	Senate	House
223,633	193,697	25-12	70-35

During the autumn, relieved from campaigning duties, Garfield plunged into reading and study, but in spite of the tone of his letters just quoted, it was not the Southern problem nor the status of the negro that engrossed his interest, but the wholly different issues presented by the national finances. Garfield felt that the first phase of his Congressional career was at an end, that of purely military and political legislation, and he turned his attention definitely in a new direction.

CHAPTER XII
FIRST STEPS IN FINANCE, COMMITTEE OF
WAYS AND MEANS

1865-1867

THE second phase of Garfield's Congressional life began when, in the autumn of 1865, he deliberately undertook to prepare himself for leadership in the field of financial legislation. The inspiration for this ambition was to be found not in any personal experience on his part, or in any interest in finance or banking, for throughout his life Garfield was practically destitute of business connections, but in the illumination he had received while the guest of Secretary Chase in the autumn of 1862. The letters he then wrote show that he was deeply impressed with the importance of the great problems of currency, taxation and funding, and felt a definite inclination to turn his powers to that field of political activity. It was the intellectual problem that interested him, the opportunity for keen analysis and leadership. It is probable that during the whole of his service on the Committee on Military Affairs he had cherished this intention, for whenever occasion offered he took part in debate on financial measures. In his first session he was too busy to say a great deal, but two brief speeches are worth mentioning, one in favor of taxing the stock of whiskey on hand, January 20, 1864, and one on February 13 supporting a resolution authorizing the Secretary of the Treasury to sell gold. On the first bill he took high ground. "Every man," he said, "owns and produces property with the understanding that the Government has the right to tax it, and I propose that we shall exercise that right now," but when the Senate refused to accept the proposal, he changed his vote to secure the passage of the bill. In the second case he remarked:¹ "There are two ele-

¹ Hinsdale, *Works of James A. Garfield*, Vol. I, p. 38.

ments which decide the question of war. One is military, the other is financial. The man who destroys the finances of a country ruins it as thoroughly as he who destroys its army." He therefore advocated the proposal to allow the secretary to sell gold as a means to "knock down the price" and thus strengthen the credit of the government. These speeches were incursions into what later became his chief field of action, but the time had not yet come for him to try to lead in that region.

In the second session of his first Congress, when military legislation was less pressing, he found time to take an active part in the discussion of nearly every financial measure brought forward. Among his various remarks, all of which showed keenness and familiarity with the subjects of currency, banking and taxation, one or two quotations may serve to illustrate his attitude and his style of utterance. He vigorously criticised the income tax, for instance, and strenuously opposed a sales tax. Of the former he said, February 16, 1865, that "its failure to discriminate between different kinds of income made it, as now administered, the essence of injustice. There are men who have no other capital than their hands and brains who are taxed more than men worth a hundred thousand dollars. A captain in the Army, with a family to support, and with no wealth but his salary, pays more income tax to the government than many a man who has \$50,000 invested and lives comfortably without labor or risk. I believe it can be made tolerable by such a classification of sources of income as is made in the law of Great Britain for 1842 and by taxing the income of labor less than that which arises from unproductive wealth." As for the sales tax, he denounced Boutwell's proposal to impose one as "less defensible as a mode of raising revenue than any I have ever heard in this Congress. I believe I am right in saying that no writer on political economy of any considerable reputation has ever favored a tax on sales. . . . I hope this Congress will not commit the folly of taking up a cast-off and exploded dogma."¹

In the autumn of 1865, when unable to take the stump,

¹ *Cong. Globe*, 38 Cong., 2 sess., p. 844.

he turned to reading. "I almost thank the fate that gave me a lame ankle," he wrote to Hinsdale (October 14); "I have read the history and philosophy of the tariff question very thoroughly. . . . When I see you I want to give you the salient points in the history of British commercial policy. It is very curious and interesting." As an outcome of this season of reading and reflection he gave a lecture at Poughkeepsie, New York, November 22, on "The Mercantile System." In commenting on it to Austin, he incidentally stated his attitude on protection and free trade, showing that he accepted as established the familiar "Infant Industry" argument in behalf of the former. "I am in favor of protection as a temporary measure and to secure us against foreign control, but I look forward to the constant tendency toward Free Trade which one article after another will reach as its manufacture becomes fully established." (January 18, 1866.)

The Republican leaders were early on the spot to concert a common policy before the opening of Congress. One finds in Hayes's diary a glimpse of Garfield at a caucus of Ohio members December 1, where he impressed the future president as "a smooth ruddy pleasant man, not very strong."¹ The next day a general Republican caucus met and agreed to oppose the admission of members from the South under the new governments. "Our prospects are brightening," he wrote his wife (December 3), "in the congressional way; at the caucus last night there was developed a robust spirit which gives me great hope that the fruits of victory will not be thrown away." But what gave Garfield the greatest satisfaction was his appointment by the speaker as a member of the Committee on Ways and Means, which was charged with all financial legislation. He wrote of it to Austin (December 13): "It has been very gratifying to me to find so many of the leading members of the government and of Congress expressing kind and complimentary sentiments in regard to me. Mr. Chase wrote before I left home expressing a desire that I should be a member of the Committee of Ways and Means which has always been the leading and most impor-

¹ C. R. Williams, *Life of R. B. Hayes*, Vol. I, p. 277.

tant committee of the House. . . . Sec. McCulloch requested the Speaker to appoint me on Ways and Means or as Chairman of the Committee on Claims. I preferred the former and though I made no request about it, after the Chairman I could not have a more creditable or more desirable place. The Sec. of the Treasury told Gov. Dennison that I had read the history of finance more thoroughly than any other member of Congress."

In his biographical notes of 1880 Garfield added some details. "When the 39th Congress assembled in December, I surprised the Speaker very much when he came and asked me if I had any request to make about the make-up of the committees, by telling him that I had one, and that was that I might be left off the Military committee. . . . 'Well,' he said, 'that is the most remarkable request I have ever heard of. . . . If you don't want that, there are dozens of men now back from the army who would like it. What do you want?' I said I would like to go on a committee where I can study finance. That is to be the great question. . . . I was dropped from the Military committee at my request and went on to Ways and Means, just at the time when we were beginning to handle those great dry questions of detail about tariff, taxation, currency and the public debt."

The Congress of 1865 found few changes in the Republican leaders. The same veterans were there who had directed legislation in the previous body. In addition there now returned to Congressional life several men who had had considerable experience before this time and who naturally stepped at once back into their old prominence, as Schenck, Davis and others had done in 1863. From Ohio came J. A. Bingham, who had served in four Congresses, 1855 to 1863, but who had lost his seat in the "landslide" of 1862. He was a vociferous leader of the radical type. Another still older veteran was Columbus Delano, who had served back in Tyler's presidency, and still another was Samuel Shellabarger, who had first entered Congress in 1861 but, like Bingham, had temporarily been defeated by S. S. Cox in 1862, only to defeat him in turn in 1864. Delano was an old-time Whig. Shellabarger stood high as a lawyer. From New

York a figure of a different type reappeared in Roscoe Conkling, who had served from 1859 to 1863, a purely business politician, with none of the antislavery fury that burned in such men as Bingham or Julian or Ashley. Massachusetts sent back N. P. Banks, who had been speaker in 1855. In the second session of this Congress, Horace Maynard of Tennessee, formerly for three terms a Whig, now reappeared as a Republican.

From the Democratic seats some of the sturdiest fighters of the preceding sessions were missing—S. S. Cox and Pendleton of Ohio and Holman of Indiana, who had been dislodged in the contest of 1864. James Brooks of New York, equally pugnacious, appeared, but was soon unseated, depriving the opposition party of his ready tongue and untiring persistence. The same fate befell Voorhees of Indiana, but his place was taken by two other Democrats of sturdy quality from the same state, Niblack and M. J. Kerr.

The only changes in chairmanships in the Congress of 1865 were those arising from vacancies in the list of 1863 or from the creation of new committees. The Ways and Means Committee was this year divided into three committees, in view of the intolerable burdens imposed upon it. Stevens, the former chairman took the head of the new Committee on Appropriations; Pomeroy of New York, who had sat since 1861, became head of the Committee on Banking and Currency, and Morrill of Vermont, hitherto second to Stevens on the undivided committee became chairman of the Committee on Ways and Means. It was with him that Garfield began his financial service.

Before tracing Garfield's career in his chosen field it will be worth while to follow out his record on those matters of party policy and party controversy which monopolized public interest for the fifteen months after this session opened, since it was upon that, rather than his financial achievements, that his constituents passed their judgments. In December, 1865, the problem pressing for solution was whether or not the President and Congress would be able to unite on a common policy. In a letter to Hinsdale (December 11) Garfield set forth clearly his own attitude on this point.

"I have hopes that we shall be able to work with the President. He sent for me day before yesterday and we had a full and free conversation. I gave him the views of the earnest men, North, as I understand them, and we tried to look over the whole field of the difficulties before us. Sumner and Boutwell and . . . some foolish men among us are all the while bristling up for fight and seem to be anxious to make a rupture with Johnson. I think we should assume that he is with us, treat him kindly, without suspicion and go on in a firm, calmly considered course, leaving him to make the breach with the party if any is made. I doubt if he would do it under such circumstances."

Garfield discovered, however, that Johnson was determined on having his own way, especially in regard to the immediate admission of the Tennessee representatives and senators, and he soon found himself in the usual dilemma of the moderate. "I am involved," he wrote home (December 17), "in one of the strange fixes which have always beset my life. Our radical friends want me to make a speech on re-organization of the rebel states, before we adjourn. . . . The President has appealed to me to help him in reference to Tennessee and I shall find it difficult to steer between Scylla and Charybdis." Garfield managed to evade this challenge until February, when he considered that the time could no longer be postponed. So in the course of the debate on a bill to extend the existence and strengthen the organization of the Freedmen's Bureau he delivered a set speech on Reconstruction, in which, he said, his purpose was still pacific.

"In my speech," he wrote to Hinsdale (February 13), "I tried to take ground for both him (Johnson) and Congress to stand on," and later he said, "It was an attempt to oppose the dangerous theory of state suicide and yet save all the power in the hands of Congress necessary to settle the status of the rebel states."

"Two years ago," he declared,¹ "when I had the honor for the first time to address this House, the same question that is now before us was under discussion. I maintained then, as

¹ Hinsdale, *Works of James A. Garfield*, Vol. I, p. 140.

I hold today, that the Rebel States are not, in any legitimate sense of the words, out of the Union. I declared then, as I do now, that by their own act of treason and rebellion, they had forfeited all their rights in the Union, but they had released themselves from none of their obligations. It rests with the people of the Republic to enforce the performance of these obligations and, so soon as the national safety will permit, restore them to their rights." On the basis of this doctrine he justified Johnson's action in forming new southern governments as constitutional, and then went on to maintain that it rested wholly with Congress whether to accept these governments or to form others. His conclusion was that since the temper of the Southerners was not yet that of reconciliation to the Union they had tried to destroy, and since the welfare of the negroes was dependent upon the form Reconstruction should take, Congress must insist upon proofs of loyalty before admitting even Tennessee, "the least treasonable of them all."

But the situation was hopeless, for Johnson showed no comprehension of the rising temper of the Northern radicals and refused to entertain any idea of compromise. "I fear we are losing, if we have not already lost the President," wrote Garfield to Hinsdale (February 13). "He is fast falling into the hands of our enemies." A few days later he said (February 19): "The elements here are murky with storm. It must burst or pass this week. Within the next three days the President must sign or veto the Freedmen's Bureau Bill or if he lets it alone it becomes law without his sanction." On the very day that Garfield wrote the rupture came, for Johnson returned the bill without his signature and with a veto message that made plain his rigid refusal to accept anything from Congress but complete submission to "his plan" of Reconstruction as a completed, final process. The situation that Garfield dreaded had come into being.

Then began a resolute movement on the part of the Congressional leaders, and of practically all the Republican members to secure the passage of laws and of a constitutional amendment, the later Fourteenth, which should protect the ex-slaves within the "rebel states," and should make it im-

possible for the latter to be received back into full rights in the Union without agreeing to provisions which should safeguard the fruits of victory. Rallying their party and overriding the vetoes of the obstinate President, they passed a series of measures which was not concluded until, at the end of the session, the proposed Fourteenth Amendment had been submitted to the states for ratification, and one reconstructed state, Tennessee, which had promptly voted to ratify it, had been formally reinstated in all its rights.

But from this contest Garfield, following his deliberate decision, almost entirely abstained. While voting regularly with his party, even when, as in the case of an early draft for the Fourteenth Amendment, he disapproved of details, he said practically nothing. In spite of his keen interest in the subject of Reconstruction and his clear thinking on the legal aspect of the conflict, he chose to confine his efforts in this Congress, after February, entirely to the problems of finance, intending to make that his special field in legislation and to aim therein for the leadership. This was to be his definite ambition.

Yet it so happened that, in March, he participated as counsel in one of the most famous political lawsuits in the history of the Supreme Court, the case of *Ex parte Milligan*.¹ In this case the Supreme Court held that a military commission which in 1864 sentenced to death certain Indiana Copperheads for plotting resistance to the draft, was an unconstitutional exercise of war powers, on the ground that martial law could not be legally applied in a state where there was no rebellion. The legal aspect of this case will be dealt with in another chapter; here it should be said that in the passions of the time Northern sentiment, ignoring the legal points, saw only what appeared to be an interposition of the Supreme Court on behalf of the hated "Copperheads." Garfield, who served as counsel for the condemned men, appeared with Jeremiah Black, late Attorney-General in Buchanan's cabinet and sundry other strong Democrats of the states' rights type, against the Attorney-General of Johnson's cabinet. He seemed to be in bad political company.

¹ 4 Wallace 2.

The final adjournment, July 28, found Garfield exhausted, but satisfied, on the whole, with his achievements. He had already discovered, however, that his renomination for Congress was to be openly challenged, for the first time, by a competitor, Darius Cadwell of Warren, who was backed by John Hutchins, former Congressman. The first sign was the appearance of articles in Youngstown and Warren newspapers assailing Garfield's record, chiefly in connection with the draft legislation of 1864-1865, but dwelling principally upon his participation in the Milligan case, "in defense of traitors." He wrote to Hinsdale (June 18): "Hutchins and Cadwell are hard at work, burrowing in the townships and coming above the surface now and then in the newspapers. How much they can effect I do not know. If a plain honest course of hard work will not secure the approval of the people, I prefer to be beaten." To another correspondent he said of the Milligan case (F. E. Hutchins, August 2), "I knew when I took the Indiana case that I would probably be misunderstood, but I was [so] strongly convinced of the importance of the decision of the case on the right side, that I was willing to subject myself to the misunderstanding of some, for the sake of securing the supremacy of the civil over the military authority." The result proved that Garfield's hold in the district was too strong to be shaken. Cadwell came to the conclusion that he could make no headway and withdrew, so that at the convention, August 16, Garfield was renominated by acclamation.

In the severe Congressional campaign of 1866, fought by the radical Republicans to retain their two-thirds majority in the House, Garfield played a vigorous part. His journal for this campaign shows that he began stumping August 22 and continued until November 3, traveling four thousand miles and speaking in all parts of Ohio, especially in close Congressional districts; in Indiana, Michigan, Illinois and New York. He spoke at least forty-eight times, to judge from the enumeration in his diary, sometimes twice in one day, often outdoors and several times in the rain.

At the end he shared the exultation of the radical leaders at the unmistakable verdict of the Northern voters. "I con-

gratulate you," he wrote to a correspondent, "upon the magnificent victory we have won at the polls. . . . I trust Congress may be able to preserve the fruits of victory." Garfield's own reelection was a matter of course.

	Garfield	Coolman
Ashtabula	5,001	931
Geauga	2,488	401
Mahoning	2,933	2,275
Portage	3,342	1,982
Trumbull	4,598	1,787
	18,362	7,376

The last session of the Thirty-ninth Congress met December 3, its leaders sternly determined to garner the "fruits of victory." The Fourteenth Amendment had been accepted by Tennessee alone of the Southern state governments, and, during the session which now began, every week brought news of further unanimous or nearly unanimous rejections by Southern legislatures. The hope of carrying through the policy laid down the preceding year was thus finally killed. It remained for Congress either to try to drive a bargain with the President and his Southern state governments, or, relying on the two-thirds majority already at hand and certain to be present in the next Congress, to override him and them by a new and wholly radical plan. In addition the unfinished problems of finance, currency and tariff must be brought to some conclusion. The session was bound to be congested and bitter.

Garfield wrote a long letter to Hinsdale reviewing the signs of the times as he saw them (January 1): "In reference to Reconstruction, I feel that if the Southern states should adopt the constitutional amendment within a reasonable time, we are morally bound to admit them to representation. If they reject it, then I am in favor of striking for impartial suffrage, though I see that such a course is beset with grave dangers. Now Congress seems inclined to rush forward without waiting even for the action of the Northern states, thus giving the South the impression, and our political enemies at home a pretext for saying, that we were not

in good faith when we offered the constitutional amendment. If we could succeed in an impeachment of the President it would be a blessing, probably, but it is perfectly evident that with the Senate constituted as it is, we cannot effect an impeachment. Still Ashley and such like impracticable men, are determined to push the insane scheme of making the attempt and setting the country in a ferment.

"Generally there seems to be a fear on the part of many of our friends that they must do some absurdly extravagant thing to prove their radicalism. I am trying to do two things viz: be a radical and not a fool, which, if I am to judge by the exhibitions around me, is a matter of no small difficulty."

It soon became so evident that the Southern states did not dream of ratifying the pending amendment, that the Republican majority turned energetically toward a new and more drastic policy of Reconstruction. There was introduced and pushed through relentlessly a series of measures for curbing the executive power, and for enacting a wholly new reconstruction of the South that should carry with it both negro suffrage and the disfranchisement of the leading ex-rebels. Garfield took part in the debate on a few occasions, making a speech on February 8 which employed a figure so apt as to lead to its frequent quotation by later writers.

He said, in sum, that the terms offered by Congress through the Fourteenth Amendment were "nothing for vengeance but everything for liberty and safety. . . . I here affirm that so magnanimous, so merciful a proposition has never been submitted by a sovereignty to rebels since the day when God offered forgiveness to the fallen sons of men." If the rebel states had accepted the terms he would have felt bound to let them in, and he had felt bound to give them full time to deliberate and act. Then, in words often quoted, he said: "They have deliberated; they have acted. The last one of the sinful ten has at last with contempt and scorn, flung back into our teeth the magnanimous offer of a generous nation. It is now our turn to act. They would not co-operate with us in rebuilding what they destroyed. We must remove the rubbish and rebuild from the bottom."¹

¹ Hinsdale, *Works of James A. Garfield*, Vol. I, pp. 248-250.

For the failure of this plan and the necessity of the new Congressional policy he held the Democratic party and President Johnson personally responsible. "If the Democratic party with the president at its head had, on any day since July last, advised the people of the South to accept the constitutional amendment and come in as Tennessee did, it would have been done." At the end in an eloquent passage he reviewed the slow progress since the opening of the war of the idea of negro freedom and equality in the North and in the Republican party, drawing freely on his own military recollections. "But, sir," he concluded, "the hand of God has been visible in this work, leading us by degrees out of the blindness of our prejudices to see that the fortunes of the Republic and the safety of the party of liberty are inseparably bound up with the rights of the black man. . . . As a temporary measure I give my support to this military measure, properly restricted. It is severe. It was written with a steel pen made out of a bayonet."¹

Having voted for the bill when it passed the House, he supported it again on its return from the Senate with amendments, defending himself and those who took the same position against the extravagant language of Stokes of Tennessee and Thad Stevens of Pennsylvania, who called it a weak surrender to the President and a universal amnesty. "Mr. Speaker," he said,² "there are some gentlemen who live among the eagles on the high mountain peaks beyond the limits of perpetual frost, and they see the lineaments on the face of freedom so much clearer than I do, [that] whenever any measure comes here that seems almost to grasp our purpose, they rise and tell us it is all poor and mean and a surrender of liberty."

The political contests of this session were continued after March 4 without interruption, since an act had been passed for the meeting of the Fortieth Congress on that day. The leaders meant to finish their program and, at the same time, to prevent Johnson from having a free hand without Congress to watch him. The main business was the passage of a

¹ Hinsdale, *Works of James A. Garfield*, Vol. I, p. 254.

² *Cong. Globe*, 39 Cong., 2 sess., p. 1820.

supplementary Reconstruction Bill, providing for the actual rebuilding of the Southern states, under military government, and with the conditions of negro suffrage and disfranchisement of ex-Confederates positively laid down. Garfield was present, of course, and voted for this measure as for other allied ones, but made no attempt to take a prominent part. He attended also a second session in July, which was devoted to the enactment of a third Reconstruction Act, overriding sundry interpretations of the first one by the President and the Attorney-General which seemed unduly to favor the ex-Confederates. The spirit in which he resumed his duties at this time is well illustrated in a letter to his wife, describing his arrival in the "metropolitan focus of heat and his reluctant entrance in the House." "I got my seat in time to answer to the roll call at 12 o'clock, and now, while Jim Brooks is 'roaring' [at] us less gently than a 'sucking dove' I will write you a word. . . . A thousand fans are busy in the gallery and on the floor and I have used one a dozen times since I began this letter. In short, after a miserable, weary ride, with a heavy homesick heart, I am here in a state of exquisite discomfort. . . . We have a quorum of both houses and I have some hope that we may be able to restrict our legislation to the single purpose for which we have met, the correction of the President and Attorney General in their attempt to stop our work of reconstruction. If so we will not be here more than two or three weeks."

Far more important in Garfield's own mind than any participation in Reconstruction debates and contests was his effort during this Congress to make a place for himself as a leader in the field of finance. Tactically his problem was that of so conducting himself in his new position as to win the confidence of the party leaders and of the House majority, with the hope of ultimately being made chairman. As a junior member it was now his task to work in committee in the preparation of bills, under direction of the chairman, who would divide the work among the members for the sake of expediency, and he might thus have a strong part in shaping some one of the great financial measures. He could

also, in general committee meeting, have an opportunity to comment and criticise and make suggestions concerning the other bills before they were submitted. Upon his record in this field much would depend, for a useful and thorough committeeman was certain to receive recognition.

In the House his functions would be to support the committee measures by vote and by argument, if necessary, backing up his colleagues and the chairman when they were hard pressed by any opposition. He might also expect to be given the charge of some bill or bills, relieving the chairman of the burden of his heavy duties, and in this lay the great test of his ability. If he proved himself a strong, firm and yet conciliatory leader, able to engineer his bill through the rules of the House and by his own skillful use of motions and parliamentary devices to avoid defeat or discomfiture, he would be on the direct road to future consideration as chairman. He would be distinctly on trial all the time. There was no one approved method of securing this success; men did it in all sorts of ways; and the House had known leaders who were mild or irascible, dominating or conciliatory, stubborn or pliable. But the one great desideratum was an intuitive sense of what the temper and tendency of the House was on any subject at a particular time. Lacking this, the strongest, most energetic leader was sure, sooner or later, to run into defeat.

The task that confronted the committee was a laborious and perplexing one, for although the problem of finding revenue for war expenditures was at an end, the difficulties of disentangling and reducing to order the mountainous mass of bonds, notes, certificates, etc., incurred to raise funds, and of simplifying on a reasonable basis the excessive taxes imposed since 1864, had to be carried out under the burden of a severely depreciated currency and feverish business uncertainty.

Garfield has left no letter or journal recording his preliminary studies, but in his notes of 1880 he described them in such a way as to show that he secured a broad historical foundation. "I laid myself out to study very thoroughly the history of English finance, during the Napoleonic wars;

went over the debates and the speeches and the writers of that time and then traced it down through our own Revolutionary times, Hamilton's time, Jackson's time, until I had made a very thorough study, keeping copious notes as I went along of what I read." The results of these studies are perfectly apparent in all his earlier speeches, for the extent to which he tried to apply both the lessons of history and the reasoning of thinkers was something that singled him out among nearly all other Congressmen at that time or later. It caused his opponents to call him "academic," "bookish," "unpractical" and "theoretical," while it impressed his friends as "scholarly."

The first element to note in Garfield's creed was his strong objection to monopoly of any sort. Between the opening of Congress and the time when the great financial measures came up he showed this on a number of occasions. On December 11, for instance, he reintroduced the bill which had failed in the previous Congress, to prevent any state from creating a railroad monopoly within its borders, calling the measure "a plain declaration of the right of Congress to regulate commerce between the states and to strike a blow at those hateful monopolies which have so long been preying upon the body of American industry."¹ This ultimately became law.

Again, on February 1, he strongly opposed a bill to exclude from the privilege of American registry all vessels which had been transferred to foreign flags during the Civil War, on the ground that it was a mere device to give business to American shipyards. "I declare myself forever opposed to all monopolies," he said, "whether of railroads, shipbuilders or of any other association which proposes to cripple the commerce of the Republic."² When a bill was pending to regulate trade with British North America, in place of the reciprocity treaty now terminated, Garfield persistently fought efforts to place high duties on coal and lumber, on the ground that these industries were and had been prosperous. "I hope," he said, "we will not impose additional

¹ *Cong. Globe*, 39 Cong., 1 sess., p. 18.

² Hinsdale, *Works of James A. Garfield*, Vol. I, p. 121.

taxes upon the consumers of this country everywhere . . . by increasing the protection of men who are making very good profits at the business they are engaged in.”¹ The influence of “orthodox” *laissez faire* economics is evident in all these utterances, and the total absence of respect for business profits, as such.

The first of the financial bills to be considered was the loan bill, which came up in Committee of the Whole in March. This raised the whole question of government credit, since it confronted the problem of the depreciated greenbacks, as well as that of the vast mass of short-term, miscellaneous obligations which had been poured out in the last two years of the war. The bill embodied two main proposals—one authorizing the Secretary of the Treasury to exchange the floating debt for long-term bonds or, if necessary, to sell such bonds for coin for the purpose of redeeming floating obligations; the other empowering the Secretary of the Treasury to exchange bonds for greenbacks. The plain purpose was to enable McCulloch not only to refund the debt, but to begin contraction of the paper currency. Such was the intention of the Committee of Ways and Means, and such, apparently, was the desire of the House, which had voted, on December 18, by 144 to 6, a resolution squarely favoring the contraction of the currency.

As soon as the debate began, however, it appeared that a considerable number of members had become alarmed at the prospect of any step which might cause a decline in the premium on gold as likely to lead to a drop in general prices and a business depression. When Garfield took the floor, March 16, to make his first important speech on the bill, he had become aware that the Secretary’s plan was in danger. Nevertheless, with extreme boldness he met the issue squarely.² The first part of his speech dealt with the necessity of refunding, a matter on which there was no great difference of opinion. The major part was a discussion of the problem of returning to specie payment, on the assumption that the greenbacks would eventually be wholly with-

¹ *Cong. Globe*, 39 Cong., 1 sess., p. 1800.

² Hinsdale, *Works of James A. Garfield*, Vol. I, p. 183.

drawn and that the national banknotes should furnish the normal currency of the country.

As to the method to be employed Garfield took his stand upon the close historical parallel furnished by the financial history of Great Britain after the Napoleonic wars. What Great Britain had then done could be repeated now. Starting with the Parliamentary bullion report of 1810 as an absolutely incontrovertible basis, he argued that the resumption law of 1819, which actually resulted in raising British banknotes to par in 1821, only fifteen months after the law went into operation, proved that resumption would not take very long or be extremely difficult. At the end, in answer to Thad Stevens, he boldly admitted that to secure resumption some inconvenience must be endured. "The gentleman from Pennsylvania tells us that he is in favor of returning to specie payments when it could be done without disturbing or deranging the business of the country. If he waits for that it can never be done. It cannot be done without first contracting the currency and producing a temporary stringency in the money market. If we have not the nerve to do that, if we have not patriotism to suffer that temporary inconvenience, we must go on in the swift road to financial disaster and ultimate national bankruptcy."

No small part of the opposition arose from the large discretionary powers the bill proposed to confer on the Secretary of the Treasury, Hugh McCulloch, who was unpopular because of his hard-money principles and because he remained in the cabinet under Johnson. Garfield met this objection with equal daring. "The chief objection to the pending bill is that it confers too much power—more than ought to be entrusted to any man. Now, sir, tremendous power was given to General Grant . . . it was necessary to trust some one with that power. Congress could not command armies and plan campaigns. So also in the present emergency some one must be trusted with power. Congress cannot negotiate a loan, cannot regulate the details of the currency, or fund the debt. It must delegate the power. . . . It is the secretary of the Treasury . . . who needs that power. I vote to give it to the incumbent of that high office, whoever he

may be and hold him responsible for the use he may make of it."¹

Garfield's boldness was beyond that of the House. When the vote was taken, the bill proved to have three majority against it, 66 to 69, so Garfield, changing his vote to the negative, moved a reconsideration and, on March 19, again addressed the House, arguing for the adoption of the bill. Against his wish, it was recommitted, after the reconsideration had been voted, and the Ways and Means Committee took up the problem of finding a substitute that would pass. This was accomplished by bringing in the bill with a limitation upon the amount of greenbacks that the Secretary might retire any one month. This went through easily, March 23, by a vote of 83 to 53, and after passing the Senate it became law on April 12.

It is clear that in this, his first conspicuous attempt to carry through the House a financial measure of the foremost importance, Garfield suffered a marked defeat. Either he misjudged the temper of the majority or, knowing it, he insisted on taking so bold a course as to damage his chances by trying to force a vote upon the bill unmodified. When the measure was again brought forward, with the compromise clause attached, it was the veteran chairman of the committee, Morrill, who took charge, Garfield taking no part in the proceedings, beyond a single remark. It is to be noted that Garfield's announced readiness to compromise did not prevent him from trying, in any case, to get the best results; he preferred to compromise after a defeat, not for fear of being beaten. Had he been more concerned with his own prestige, he would certainly have avoided running the risk he took in trying to commit the House to so bold a plan.

As if to emphasize his lack of caution, Garfield's next step was to challenge the leadership of Schenck, his former chairman, who brought up a bill for reorganizing the army. Garfield, feeling sure that he interpreted the feeling of many officers, did not hesitate to offer a series of amendments proposing to abolish different kinds of service, regular, veteran, colored; to lengthen terms of enlistment; to abolish military

¹ Hinsdale, *Works of James A. Garfield*, Vol. I, p. 196.

commissions; to provide for promotion by merit for all officers. In every case he was beaten, usually by large majorities. Here again, the young congressman was showing a boldness which a more self-regarding man would have avoided, since he ran the risk of incurring defeat after defeat, by challenging a committee chairman of the strength and experience of Schenck.¹

By the time this bill was out of the way the Committee of Ways and Means was again in action with a bill to reduce the internal revenue taxes, which came up for consideration May 7. Into this immensely complicated subject Garfield did not plunge with the same ardor as that he had shown in connection with the loan bill. While Morrill, the chairman, took main charge, Garfield devoted himself to assisting by minor motions and suggestions, nearly every one practical in character and revealing that, with his customary diligence, he had acquired a comprehension of the manufacturing process of the articles under discussion.

Last of the series came the tariff bill, which was brought up June 25 and struggled over for several weeks. Morrill, author of the Republican protective tariff of 1861, was the framer of this bill, and it was stated by him to be a bill for the dual purpose of furnishing revenue and giving increased protection where it was needed. So far Garfield had found it an easy matter to work with his committee members for contraction of the currency and for reduction of taxes. But now, with the principles which he had published in the Poughkeepsie speech, he was called upon to coöperate in passing a primarily protective bill. It seemed as though he might have difficulties. As a matter of fact, he had none, for nothing in his principles opposed protective duties, as such, unless they operated to create a monopoly. In view of the importance attached to Garfield's tariff views in later times, and especially in view of his being called in serious historical works a "free trader," it is necessary to note with some care his words and his actions in connection with this measure.

Garfield's first entrance into the debate was on June 30, when the tariff on railroad iron was under consideration,

¹ *Cong. Globe*, 39 Cong., 1 sess., pp. 2027 ff.

and a general debate on the status of the iron manufacture had sprung up. Garfield protested against making the rate lower on railroad iron than on common bar iron and used the following language:¹ "I am unwilling in this bill to adopt all the dogmas of any one of the extreme parties, whether free traders or tariff men. But as a practical question I demand that our own interests in this country shall not be eaten up and destroyed by the interests of foreign manufacturers." He then summarized the British efforts to control the American iron market and continued, "Those gentlemen who desire to give Great Britain the opportunity to accomplish that purpose will vote with the gentleman from Iowa on the proposition he has made." Then turning to a free trader he made this illuminating rejoinder. "I wish to respond to a question of the distinguished gentleman from New York city [Mr. Raymond]. He wants to know where this cry for protection will end. . . . I will answer the gentleman. It will be, if that unfortunate day ever comes, when American labor is only equal to the pauper labor of Great Britain in its wages per day. If that happy day shall ever come when the amount of our capital shall be proportionately as great, and the rate of our interest as low as it is in Great Britain, then he may be able to find what he seeks."

On July 5 to 9, at various times, he offered sundry amendments, nearly all of them calling for added protection. He attacked the protection to linseed oil as insufficient, in view of the growing importance of the industry in the western states,² and he moved and carried a duty of 50 per cent on imported gutta-percha and its manufactures; he vainly attacked a high duty on nickel as fostering a monopoly for a small group of manufacturers; he carried duties on wire hairpins, guncotton, nitroglycerine and malt; he opposed the reduction of the duties on tea and coffee as contrary to sound revenue principles, using Great Britain as his example; he was willing to protect American lumber from Canadian to a degree sufficient to counterbalance the heavier American internal taxation; and he tried unsuccessfully to

¹ *Cong. Globe*, 39 Cong., 1 sess., p. 3516.

² *Ibid.*, p. 3603.

make gunny bags pay duty whether they entered empty or containing merchandise.

At the end, on July 10, just before the final vote was taken, he assumed charge of the bill and in so doing made a formal closing speech, which then and later has been considered as a statement of his full creed.¹ "The abstract theories of free trade and protection as laid down in the books," he said, "can be of little practical value in the consideration of this bill." He then declared that he was no protectionist in the sense of those who wished to exclude all foreign imports. "Besides placing ourselves in an attitude of perpetual hostility to other nations and greatly reducing our carrying trade, we should make monopolists of all the leading manufacturers of this country who could fix the price of all their products at their discretion." On the other hand, he was no free trader, if that involved abolishing all protective duties and imposing a tariff for revenue only. To do so "would revolutionize our industrial system and place ourselves at the mercy of foreign manufacturers." What he urged, as contrasted with both these views, was "that a properly adjusted competition between home and foreign products is the best gauge by which to regulate foreign trade. Duties should be so high that our manufacturers can fairly compete with the foreign product, but not so high as to enable them to drive out the foreign article, enjoy a monopoly of the trade and regulate the price as they please. To this extent I am a protectionist," he concluded.

It is evident that Garfield, in his language and in his actions, was a protectionist, and not in any sense a free trader. He believed firmly in the necessity of protection under the circumstances, chiefly against England. What, then, was there in this speech which disquieted the avowed protectionists and implanted in their minds suspicions of his "soundness" that he was never able to overcome? It was his refusal to announce his adherence to protectionism as a *permanent*, necessary policy and his willingness to admit that, if the course of events in American industry should follow that of English manufactures, the time would come

¹ Hinsdale, *Works of James A. Garfield*, Vol. I, p. 205.

when the United States also might profitably adopt free trade. When he said, "I am for a protection which leads to ultimate Free Trade. I am for that Free Trade which can be achieved only through protection," he used a phraseology that revealed him, to a Pennsylvania protectionist, as a man who could not be absolutely relied upon. Protection to him was only a device, not a creed. And to men with whom protection to manufactures was almost a religion, his attitude, although protectionist, was what they called "unsound." Men with such creeds think in symbols, in formulæ. Garfield had uttered the heretical words "Free Trade" without alarm or execration. He had even announced that under conceivable circumstances he might be for it. For a man like "Pig-iron" Kelley or Horace Greeley, that was enough to condemn him.

By the opening of the second session Garfield was seriously alarmed by signs of a rapidly rising opposition to the policy of contraction inaugurated in the act of 1866. Writing on January 1 to Hinsdale he said: "In reference to finance, I believe that the great remedy for our ills is an early return to specie payments which can only be effected by contraction of our paper currency. There is a huge clamor from all quarters against both and in favor of expansion. You know my views on the Tariff; I am equally assailed by the Free Traders and the extreme Tariff men. There is passion enough in the country to run a steam engine in every village and a spirit of proscription that keeps pace with the passion. My own course is chosen and it is quite probable that it will throw me out of public life. . . . I am reading up the history of the rise and fall of the United States Bank, in order to meet and resist a strong purpose among many members of Congress, to abolish the National Bank system and have the government issue Greenbacks instead."

Garfield's gloomy predictions in his letter to Hinsdale regarding financial matters were not fulfilled at this session. The House stood firmly by its original intention to permit contraction of the currency, and laid on the table or rejected resolutions to stop it, and Garfield, freed from concern in that quarter, could devote his attention to constructive legislation. What increased the interest of the situation was that

Morrill, the senior member of his committee, was elected to the Senate, leaving the chairmanship in the next Congress vacant. There before Garfield stood the goal of his ambition, and his action on the financial bills assumed a competitive character. He wrote to Austin (February 15): "We are now working day and evening on our tax and tariff bills, and I am giving my whole energy to these subjects. The chairmanship of the Comm. of Ways and Means lies between one other man and myself. He is my senior in years and service in the House but has not much power as a speaker in the House." This rival was Mr. Samuel Hooper of Massachusetts.

A short session of Congress is, however, a very poor time for the display of his powers by any member ambitious of distinction, owing to the scant time for the consideration of necessary bills and the almost inevitable congestion of public business. In this particular year the time which the House could devote to financial measures was still further curtailed by the multiplicity of radical Reconstruction proposals considered and the heated debates they evoked. Garfield found no real opportunity for leadership. The tax bill made further modifications of the internal taxes, which Garfield on the whole approved, but as before he made no effort to lead in this field. On February 22 he took occasion to remark that the progressive feature of the income tax struck him as unconstitutional.¹

The tariff, of course, drew forth much stronger efforts on his part, but so congested was the time by the reconstruction measures, that neither he nor Morrill, the chairman, was able to save the bill. It did not return from the Senate until February 2; then it came with an amendment which embodied the ideas of David A. Wells, the Commissioner of Revenue, and was at a considerable distance from the House measure. It was made a special order for February 21, but got thrust aside, and did not finally come before the House until the twenty-fifth. This was so late in the session that its failure was certain unless the House was ready to expedite matters by a free suspension of the rules. But a sufficient number of Republican high protectionists

¹ *Cong. Globe*, 39 Cong., 2 sess., p. 1482.

joined with Democratic low tariff men to defeat every such motion. The bill was debated February 26 and 28 and, but for the Senate amendments, could have been passed, but as it was the necessary two-thirds proved unattainable.

Garfield, on February 27, urged that the real problem was one of revenue. "The necessities of the revenue of this government," he said, "are so great that the old-time doctrine of protection on one hand and free trade on the other are of but little practical value in this debate." A little later, perhaps with rash frankness, he said: "If gentlemen would consent to the necessary reduction of the currency, which would bring prices down nearer to their proper level there would be no call for so formidable a tariff. But what I am compelled to call the strange and mistaken policy of this House on the question of the currency has compelled us to ask for an increase of the tariff."¹ At the end, Garfield, on February 28, appealed to all members of the Union party to lay aside their personal preferences and unite to pass the tariff, unless they wished to see the Democrats, profiting by their division, succeed in blocking the bill; but the handful of Republicans proved obdurate and the two-thirds could not be obtained. Morrill had to abandon the effort.

By the end of this session of his second Congress there can be no doubt that Garfield had completed his novitiate and was recognized as standing among the prominent men of his party in the House. Looking back over his record since the autumn of 1863 one is conscious of several features. The foremost thing is the beginning of a new debating style. In place of the classical orations of 1863-1865, filled with allusions and quotations, he began to cultivate a quieter rhetoric and a severer manner. Furthermore, he found himself taking more account of the possible effect of his speech, trying to meet and disarm objections, throwing his emphasis upon persuasion and not upon declamation. He recognized this duality in himself distinctly as early as February 5, 1865, when he wrote to Hinsdale: "I find two pieces of machinery in my mind which appear to be quite distinct from each other, the descriptive and the argumentative. When I

¹ *Cong. Globe*, 39 Cong., 2 sess., p. 1617.

gear on the latter, illustrations do not occur to me, when the former they come without asking."

Garfield's very facility in speaking was made the ground of a criticism passed upon him by Reid:¹ "He spoke so readily that members were constantly asking his services in behalf of favorite measures; and in the impulsive eagerness of a young man and a young member, he often consented. He thus came to be too frequent a speaker; and by and by the House wearied a little of his polished periods and began to think him too fond of talking. After a time this little reaction in the general feeling of the House toward him wore off." A year later, when Mark Hopkins, Garfield's honored teacher, made this same criticism, probably after having read Reid's sketch, Garfield's reply showed that he had already learned the lesson (July 24, 1868): "I am fully conscious of the mistake I made in speaking too much in the early years of my congressional life, and during the last two years I have been trying to atone for it."

In his parliamentary tactics and principles he continued to be an individualist; that is, he constructed his own arguments, formulated his own positions and presented them as his own. This appears very clearly in all his financial speeches at this time. Reid's comment dwells upon this: "In political life he is manly, bold and outspoken. He seems to care far more for the abstract justice of propositions than for any prejudices his constituents may happen to entertain regarding them; and he has on several occasions been willing to espouse very unpopular measures, and act with very small minorities. . . . But he is not factious; and without ever surrendering his independence of judgment, he is still reckoned among the most trusty of the Radical majority."² Possibly it is this which creates, in reading the *Globe* of these years, the impression that he was not invariably effective in leading the House, in spite of his candor and good temper, his sound debating methods and his eloquence on occasion. This was marked in both sessions of this Congress, when he challenged comparison with Morrill, or Schenck, or Stevens.

¹ W. Reid, *Ohio in the War*, Vol. I, p. 759.

² *Ibid.*, p. 759.

It was not merely their greater age and experience; the reader gets the impression that on nearly every issue Garfield represented the sounder view, but that the other men better represented the opinion of the House or, as individuals, commanded more support.

Nevertheless, when all deductions are made, it is certainly true that the young volunteer officer had, in the space of only two Congresses, made good his right to a place among the very first, those from among whom the chairmen of the committees in the next session must be selected. Further than that, he was generally considered a candidate for one of the first two of these chairmanships, and might well feel as he took ship for Europe that he had successfully passed through the full period of his Congressional probation. The prominence he had acquired in his own state through his Congressional speeches and through his stumping tours of 1864 and 1866 was such that, in 1867, there was a very general demand that he should accept the Republican nomination for the governorship in the coming state election. It was recognized that there was a hard fight ahead and the language of the newspapers showed that what they wanted was a candidate who was a powerful stump speaker and could make a whirlwind campaign. "General Garfield," said the *Warren Chronicle*, April 17, "would be the strongest possible nomination the Union party of Ohio could make for Governor. He is a grand campaigner and would rouse up a spirit of enthusiasm that would burst into a flame of glorious victory in October."

This was the first, but not the last, time Garfield had to consider this possibility, which was a compliment to his oratorical ability and campaigning power, to his strong points as a candidate, in short, but by no means to his administrative capacities. Under the Democratic constitution of 1851 the governor of Ohio was little more than a figurehead. Garfield knew this perfectly well and took steps to head the movement off. "I have never given any one the least encouragement that I would be a candidate," he wrote to Austin from Hiram (April 22). "I was in Columbus on Tuesday last and found that there was an almost universal desire

among the Senators and Representatives that I should run, but I told them all that I would not think of it, and they must say no more about it. I urged them to run Gen. Cox again, and though he isn't in all respects the man we want, yet he makes a good governor, and I think would like to be nominated. . . . My health is very bad. I do not yet sleep as I ought and I am more troubled about myself than I have ever been before." His efforts were successful, although more than forty papers supported the movement for his candidacy, and the Ohio Republicans nominated another Congressman with a war record, Rutherford B. Hayes.

In turning aside this chance for distinction Garfield showed that political prominence was wholly secondary in his ambition to the opportunity to use his influence in a field where his intellectual interests were strong. When he went to Europe in the summer of 1867 he undoubtedly felt himself to be within reach of his political goal, the chairmanship of the Committee of Ways and Means. From the very beginning he had advanced straight toward it, making his mark in financial debate while he was a member of the Committee on Military Affairs; being placed on the Committee of Ways and Means in his second Congress and taking charge of important bills. He felt that his claims were strong. At the same time he would not urge them. "I may be Chairman of Ways and Means," he wrote to his wife; "I am glad to tell you that I have not spoken to Colfax on the subject and have made no effort to secure it. So if I don't get it I shall not fail. If I do, it will be all the better coming unsolicited."

The appointment of committee chairmanships was and is, however, no simple matter under our Congressional system, being tangled up with claims based on seniority, local and sectional demands and an indefinite amount of personalities to which a Speaker could not afford to be indifferent. All sorts of snags lay in Garfield's path. He was young, he had had only two terms, he had older colleagues from his own state and older colleagues in the same committee whose feelings might be involved. Furthermore, he had boldly committed himself to a body of economic doctrine that ranked him squarely with theoretical economists rather than with

any local or sectional groups. In the debates of 1864-1867 he had taken strong, sometimes advanced, ground in nearly every direction for contraction of the currency, reduction of the tariff rates and unpopular forms of taxation, such as that of taxing the stock of whiskey on hand. He had, in short, a complete program, his personal one. If Colfax were to appoint him it meant something definite and aggressive. Such a prospect is not always attractive to a speaker whose hopes for a satisfactory conduct of affairs depend to no inconsiderable degree upon having safe rather than aggressive chairmen.

In addition, the political horizon had grown decidedly darker in the autumn of 1867 and everything betokened a session in which defensive tactics would be necessary for the Republican majority. The first signs of a dangerous reaction in public feeling had shown themselves in Ohio. There the election disclosed a sudden and powerful revival of the Democratic party which had resulted in reducing the Republican majority of nearly forty thousand to the vanishing point. Hayes barely won the governorship over Thurman by 243,605 to 240,622, and the Democrats had the consolation of carrying the legislature by sufficient majorities to enable them to elect Thurman to the Senate in place of Wade. The November elections reinforced the lesson of October, when both New York and Pennsylvania were carried by the Democrats in contests for minor state officials. The whole outcome of the Reconstruction policy seemed to be rendered uncertain.

Not less sinister appeared the horizon in financial matters, for the movement in favor of paper money and against the resumption of specie payment which had had slight influence in the Thirty-ninth Congress bade fair to play a much larger part. Already a strong newspaper agitation against any further contraction and against any further privileges to bondholders, in the form of gold payments and exemption from taxation, was spreading through the Middle West.

Garfield went to Washington for a short session of Congress which met November 21 and upon arriving reported to Hinsdale: "It is clear . . . that the late defeats, the con-

flicting views on finance, the shadow of the Presidential election and the complication of the impeachment have thoroughly muddled affairs and have made the path of duty most difficult. For myself, I intend to devote myself almost exclusively to financial questions though my position on the committee is yet a matter of doubt. The chairmanship appears to hang between myself and Mr. Hooper, with the seniority rule in his favor, but with the sentiment of the House rather against him."

But on November 25, when Colfax announced the committees, Garfield found that Schenck, his old chairman of the Military Committee, had been moved across to the Ways and Means, while he himself was given the chairmanship of the Committee on Military Affairs. This could not be other than a severe disappointment and mortification. Garfield confided to his wife (November 27): "Next to the pleasure of being Chairman of Ways and Means is the pleasure I experience in knowing that there is a general expression of disappointment in the House that I was not appointed. I will not conceal from you the fact that I feel greatly wronged by being put on the Committee on Military Affairs, after I have given two years' study to finance, and I can only regard it as the result of Colfax's cowardice in deciding between Mr. Hooper and myself. I am too proud to complain, but you will let me confess my little weaknesses to you."

To Hinsdale he gave additional particulars (December 5): "In reference to my place on committees I feel as you do. It is a sort of defeat, though I have never made the slightest effort, directly or indirectly, to influence Colfax in the appointment. The inside history of the case is this, as I understand it. Colfax' real reasons were two. 1st His cowardice in not daring to make Hooper angry by appointing me over his head, and an idea that he could dodge this difficulty by taking a man from outside the committee. 2nd. His hope that he could conciliate the personal favor of Schenck who don't like him and has frequently abused him, and that I, being already his personal friend, would not be alienated if I were placed at the head of Schenck's old committee. A reason which he gave as the outer pretence is that I am in

favor of an early return to specie payments and am nearer in accord with McCulloch than with the House, and he ought to make the Committees up so as to represent the opinion of the House. As to Schenck's fitness, he has not given much thought to finance, and so far as he has formed opinions they are in the main wrong. He is an inflationist, and favors the overthrow of the National Banks, or at least he has been hitherto. The appointment took the House completely by surprise. Schenck had no such expectations and was in favor of my appointment as chrm. of ways and means. . . . Of course the place I am in is important, but out of the chosen line of my studies. I do not intend to be thrown out of financial work and already a few of us who have ideas on the subject are talking of forming a sort of voluntary committee to consider these subjects together and debate them in the House."

For the first time in his career Garfield found himself definitely balked of an ambition. He had wished to win the chairmanship by deserving it and by seeming to deserve it in the eyes of the House, but he had been passed by on grounds which were largely personal and not related to his fitness at all. It does not appear that his attitude on the tariff entered into consideration, but it is quite probable that Colfax spoke truly when he assigned Garfield's views on the currency as a disqualification. In fact, the history of the session that followed was to some extent a justification of his choice, for if Garfield had been placed at the head of the Ways and Means Committee it would have meant giving that body a chairman who, on financial principles, stood squarely in opposition to the majority of the members of the House.

Upon Garfield's career this defeat proved to have a seriously dislocating effect, for, as he said to Hinsdale, it threw him off the main line of his interests and on to a Congressional sidetrack. Up to 1867 there was a real unity in his progress, for while he had been on the Committee on Military Affairs at first, he had begun his financial activities from the start, and during the second Congress had been engaged in precisely the work he sought. In consequence of this discomfiture Garfield was now thrown back into the position he had

held in the first Congress, that of an outsider in all that related to finance. Again he found himself able to deal with financial measures only as a volunteer. If he still dreamed of leadership in that field he must begin again, at the foot of the ladder.

CHAPTER XIII
THE STRUGGLE FOR FINANCIAL LEADERSHIP
1867-1871

THE years from 1867 to 1871 mark a second stage in Garfield's Congressional career, during which, defeated in his first ambition to be chairman of the Committee on Ways and Means, he renewed his efforts at financial leadership with the same goal still in view, but with differing methods. No longer even a junior member of the committee, Garfield was compelled to work, as it were, from the outside, but he was free, none the less, to set up a program of his own, by speaking and offering amendments and thus to seek to assume a leadership among those who favored what he deemed sound finance. This might not, at the moment, affect legislation, but it would leave Garfield in a position to be considered for the chairmanship of the Committee on Ways and Means as soon as it should become vacant, provided that the views he represented prevailed among the members at that time. It may be added that, purely as a distinction, Garfield's position at the head of the Military Committee was a recognition of success, for all the other important chairmanships were still held by the veterans. Dawes led the Committee on Elections, Stevens was still chairman of Appropriations, Pomeroy of Banking and so on down the list. Garfield was the only member who began his service as late as 1863 to have one of the important committees.

In this Congress the strong group of leaders who had carried appropriations and enacted legislation during the Civil War was in full control for the last time. Stevens, frail and wasting, and destined not to survive the term, was still present to push with unrelenting sternness his policy of reconstruction; and such men as Ashley, Bingham and Julian were there to support him. Morrill had gone to the

Senate, but Washburne and Farnsworth, Colfax, Schenck, Dawes, Windom and Maynard were in their places. The ranks of these older statesmen were also strengthened by the return of some who had been prominent before the Civil War—Covode of Pennsylvania, who had had three terms, beginning with Buchanan's administration, and C. C. Washburn of Wisconsin, who had been in the House for three successive terms still earlier.

Of the younger Republicans who had entered with Garfield, Kasson of Iowa and Conkling of New York failed to sit in this Congress, but their places were more than filled by the numbers of able men who in this session began their careers. The most spectacular were two Civil War generals who had attained conspicuousness—Benjamin F. Butler of Massachusetts and John A. Logan of Illinois. With one or both of these two men Garfield had to reckon as obstinate antagonists on nearly every important measure he was to advocate. They were men of an aggressive temper and stepped instantly to the front in this their first Congress. They had commanded corps or armies and felt no modesty or hesitation in the face of the House. They made themselves felt from the start.

If the Republican side was thus strengthened the Democratic was no less stiffened up for the coming contests. "Objector" Holman was back in his seat to challenge the expenditure of every unnecessary cent; and with him once more were Brooks of New York and two able Democrats from Kentucky, J. Proctor Knott and James Beck.

In many respects, the Congress of 1867-1869 was abler in membership than any other for a generation, comprising as it did the strong men of the era which began in the fifties, and the rising young men destined to control things for the post-Reconstruction years. Political generations arrive and depart in straggling fashion; the great men of one age do not all retire simultaneously nor do their successors march upon the stage like a new relieving force. Occasionally Congresses are found where more of two generations are present simultaneously than at other times. Such Congresses are seen in retrospect to have had unusually powerful mem-

bership. What is also seen is that such Congresses are rarely the most efficient. The experience of the Fortieth Congress illustrates this truth.

In following Garfield's course during this Congress it will be worth while to deal summarily at the outset with the legislation which he introduced as chairman of the Committee on Military Affairs and then to turn to what was, for him, the main interest, the contest over financial legislation. In his assigned field Garfield transacted the usual routine matters and carried many trifling bills. He did his full duty, but no more. At the end of the session in July he brought forward the one important measure demanded by the circumstances, a bill to reduce and fix the military establishment, now that the war period was definitely over, but found himself immediately involved in a bitter controversy arising partly out of old war-time jealousies and partly out of the habitual enmity of politicians toward professional soldiers. Not a trace of either of these sentiments now remained in Garfield. His suspicions and dislikes of 1862 were buried forever and he announced his purpose in this bill "to save as far as possible the rights, honor and dignity of every officer in the army." He therefore proposed to reduce the rank and file by an outright cut but to lower the number of field officers by prohibiting the filling of vacancies as they arose through death, resignation or retirement until the number was reduced to a proper quota.¹

Instantly the new ex-military members of Congress, Butler and Logan, took the lead in a savage attack upon this plan as flagrant favoritism to "West Pointers" and a sham reduction. Butler offered an amendment for the compulsory retirement of one-half the generals in each grade, the President to make the selection. This would have called for the virtual dismissal of some of the most distinguished officers in the late war, who had won their rank through hard service and were past the prime of life.

It was perfectly clear from the language of Butler and Logan that the blow was intentionally aimed at "West Pointers" as such. Such a cold-blooded proposal stirred Gar-

¹ *Cong. Globe*, 40 Cong., 2 sess., pp. 3948 ff.

field's indignation, and he spoke with deep feeling. "I am not behind any gentleman in my admiration of the great body of citizen soldiers who won the victory and saved the nation. But I desire to say that while there are thousands of noble men, not now in the Army, who did their part as worthily as any who are in it, yet our present Army has in it more history, more glory and the record of more heroism and patriotism than any other army that ever existed in time of peace; and I, for one, though I am compelled by the necessities of the country to put the knife to the Army and reduce it nearly fifty per cent, will not by my voice or vote consent that we shall strike down by the brutal force of numbers half the official staff of the Army."¹

In spite of all that Garfield and others could say, Butler's amendment was carried, 79 to 43, and since it was clear that any bill passed under the circumstances would do irreparable injustice, Garfield secured its recommitment and made no further effort to pass it. He wrote to Hazen (August 1): "I had to fight a hard battle all the session to keep the army from being destroyed by a crazy reduction scheme. Just toward the end of the session I reported a bill for what seemed to me a very heavy reduction, but it was attacked and torn to atoms by Butler and Logan whose hatred of the Regular Army amounts almost to insanity. The result was that no bill for reduction passed and I am pleased that it is so. When the shadow of the Presidential and Congressional election is lifted we shall, I hope be in a better temper to legislate."

In the next session Garfield made another effort, bringing forward his bill as an amendment to the army appropriation on February 5. Instantly the hornets' nest rose about his ears. Logan demanded furiously that the House show its courage by turning out superfluous officers. "The man," he shouted, "who is afraid to touch the army because some men may be affected who now hold rank in it, is today a coward before the country." Garfield, ignoring Logan's language, replied that common fairness called for recognition of the difference in status between the service of professional offi-

¹ *Cong. Globe*, 40 Cong., 2 sess., p. 3953.

cers and that of volunteers. "That was an accident," he said, "in my life and in the lives of others here who were in the army with me. We turned aside from our business profession for the time being and when the war closed returned to the pursuits of civil life because we preferred to do so. But many of those whom the amendment would strike from the rolls of the Army have known no other duty for twenty years." On February 9 Garfield formally presented his plan with a well-prepared speech showing the precise needs of the army as set forth in the testimony of leading officers of the staff and line. At the end he made it clear that natural causes, deaths and resignations were rapidly thinning the ranks of the older officers and a desired minimum would soon be reached without doing injustice to men who had given their lives to the service, by dismissing them abruptly at this time.¹

On February 17, when the matter came up for final decision, Butler took the lead, bringing forward again his proposal for the outright dismissal of one-half the field officers. "Will you muster out the officers that are not needed?" he demanded, "or will you leave them in to draw pay and suck the blood of the country?" Garfield again pointed out the brutality of the plan, but once more the House followed Butler, 57 to 56. This showed a great change since the preceding July, when Butler's plan won by 79 to 43; still the damage was done unless some compromise was reached. Blaine, who had charge of the army appropriation bill, now moved a brief substitute, somewhat in line with Garfield's plan, and this, over Butler's continued opposition, was carried 111 to 65. Thus the contest ended. Garfield wrote to General Hazen (March 19): "There has never been since I entered the House of Representatives so ugly a fight against the Army as during the session just closed. Butler and Logan, followed by the Democrats and the crazy economists assaulted the Army all along the line and would have cut it in two and thrown half away but for the resistance which I made."

On Reconstruction matters Garfield followed his usual

¹ *Works of James A. Garfield*, Vol. I, p. 409.

custom of voting squarely with the party and taking little part in the debate beyond making a single speech for "record purposes," this time on January 17, defending the constitutionality of a bill which aimed to take the appointment of military officers, charged with executing the Reconstruction acts, out of the hands of the President. On the issue of impeaching President Johnson Garfield took at first a negative position, feeling that there was no legal basis for any such action. When Boutwell, from the Judiciary Committee, reported a resolution favoring impeachment, he wrote to Hinsdale (December 5): "I have examined the testimony and reports of the Judiciary Committee . . . and have been compelled to conclude that they have not made out a case. I shall therefore vote against the measure. It may, and probably will, cost me my political life. The greatest prize to which ambition can aspire in this country lies in the grasp of Ben Wade if impeachment carries. His natural fierceness makes him for it on its own merits. His interests multiply his desires by a thousand and his late defeat makes this his only great chance life can offer him. For me to vote against the measure is, of course, a heavy blow to him, and will open the way to a campaign in the 19th District, in which he will have all the popular passion added to his own, against me. I see all this, and after having studied the question of impeachment carefully, I see my duty most clearly, and I am glad to tell you that my heart and will have not hesitated for a moment in deciding my course. When the reports were laid before the House the impeachers declared they had forty majority. I have tried to do something in the way of proselyting and so have many others. I now believe we shall defeat the impeachers, perhaps heavily. . . . It is hard to be charged with lack of courage for doing what requires vastly more courage than that which is called brave."

The impeachment resolution was brought to a vote on December 7, and Garfield found a majority of his party with him, for the resolution was defeated 108 to 57. But after Johnson, at the end of his patience with Stanton, removed him from office on February 21, in apparent defiance of the terms of the Tenure-of-Office Act, the House, in great

excitement, voted a resolution of impeachment three days later. This time Garfield happened to be absent, trying an important lawsuit. As soon as he returned, he set forth his position in a speech and voted for each of the formal articles of accusation on March 2 and 3. He wrote to Austin, explaining his absence when the first vote was taken and adding: "I made a short speech today on the articles of impeachment which puts me as really on the record as I could have been had I been here a week ago. The whole matter has taken a shape in which there is but one course to take, put it through as soon and as thoroughly as possible. I don't think there will be any violence. Everything is being done in pursuance of law and there is no room for revolution." Garfield's speech, to which he referred, was in no way remarkable, since it took the ordinary view that Johnson had violated the Tenure-of-Office Act.¹

As the trial progressed Garfield watched with great interest. He wrote to Rhodes (April 28): "This trial has developed in the most remarkable manner the insane love of speaking among public men. After many days of abject begging the managers succeeded in getting the Senate to allow them all to speak and here we have been wading knee deep in words, words, words, for a whole week, and we are but little more than half way across the turbid stream. I verily believe there are fierce impeachers here, who, if the alternative of conviction of the President, coupled with their silence, and an unlimited opportunity to talk, coupled with his certain acquittal were before them, would instantly decide to speak. Then think of the speaking itself! Stevens, reeling in the shadow of death, struggling to read what could not be heard twenty feet off, Williams sitting up nights to add a few dozen pages to the manuscript which he spends two days in reading; and Nelson, using nearly two days in the worst type of Tennessee stump speech. We do not know whether Stanbery will be able to snatch his speech from the jaws of dyspepsia and fling it into the Senate. If he does the case will close, not before Tuesday of next week, and then it is

¹ *Cong. Globe*, 40 Cong., 2 sess., p. 1560.

not improbable that the fires of debate will be lighted in Senatorial breasts and burn with unquenchable ardor. There is much the same feeling here in reference to impeachment that there is in the army the night before a battle—a strange fluctuation of feeling, of hope and fear. I don't see how we can fail and yet we may."

Garfield saw in the possible succession of Wade, president of the Senate, to Johnson's place in the event of the success of impeachment, the weak point in the situation. He wrote to Rhodes (May 7): "I have a few words to whisper in your private ear, concerning what conservative Republicans think. They say that 'Conviction means a transfer to the Presidency of Mr. Wade, a man of violent passions, extreme opinions and narrow views; a man who has never studied or thought thoroughly or carefully on any subject except slavery, a grossly profane coarse nature who is surrounded by the worst and most violent elements in the Republican party; Chandler, the drunken extremist being his bosom friend in the Senate, and Ben Eggleston, a low, coarse, pot-house politician being his next friend and champion in the House:—that already the worst class of political cormorants from Ohio and elsewhere are thronging the lobbies and filling the hotels in high hopes of plunder when Wade is sworn in.'

Now these sentiments are in many respects unjust to Wade—of course you will understand they are not mine. In view of these considerations, I say, that while I do not abandon the hope that the President will be convicted, I shall not be greatly surprised if he is acquitted, nor if that sad event happens, will it be wholly without compensating results. Of course this is most sacredly confidential."

When the final ballot showed that the Senate had failed by one vote to convict Johnson, Garfield shared to the full the radical anger and disappointment. He wrote to Rhodes of "the great betrayal, and the faintness and depression which fell upon many of our friends when the great wrong was consummated." Of Fessenden and Trumbull, who voted for acquittal, he remarked (Hall, May 20), "I have no doubt that personal dislike of Mr. Wade had more power

over their minds than they were aware of." As for Chase, Garfield now renounced, permanently, that friendship and admiration he had hitherto retained for his early patron and friend. "It is the hardest thing I ever have to do," he told Rhodes (May 20), "to withdraw confidence and love from a man to whom I have once given them, but the conduct of Mr. Chase during the trial has . . . been outrageous. Three senators, at least, were taken in hand by him privately and all the weight of his office and his influence were brought to bear to save Johnson. . . . I have no doubt he is trying to break the Republican party and make himself president. . . . It is treachery for personal ends and deserves the contempt of all good men." One is inclined to see in these expressions the effect upon the ordinarily fair-minded Garfield of the intensely bitter feeling about him. In this case, as in almost no other, he followed the lead of lesser minds and looked for unworthy motives to explain actions for which, in reality, no other guide than a sense of honor and legality was necessary.

The failure of the impeachment did not in any way affect the success of the Reconstruction plan, which was pushed to a conclusion for all states but three. Garfield voted for the bills restoring the reconstructed states to their status in the Union, but made no attempt to discuss the special cases. The only aspect of the situation in which he took particular interest was the policy of amnesty, which, in common with all members of moderate temper, he held should be generously voted by Congress to all Southerners who seemed ready to coöperate, regardless of their war record. In March, when considerable opposition was shown by a number of leaders to voting any amnesty to General Longstreet, since there was no evidence that he had "repented," Garfield said: "We have none too many friends in the South. . . . It belongs not to us but to the Searcher of all hearts to decide whether a man sincerely loves the union. All we can fairly ask is that he will do what is required, and as soon as we are assured of that we should be willing to remove the disabilities. One word more. I have learned to believe that those men who fought us most honorably are generally the most reliable.

. . . I am thankful to have any man, for whatever reason, work with us in seeking to restore this Union."¹

But no such generous attitude satisfied men of the Logan stamp, and every time any amnesty bill came up they renewed their opposition to relieving "unrepentent rebels" of disabilities. On one such occasion, June 10, Garfield remarked sarcastically, "General Scott made an observation in 1861 . . . which, I think is worthy to be remembered . . . that when this war should be ended, it would require all the force of the nation to restrain the fury of the non-combatants."² In the next session, that of 1868-1869, Garfield continued his custom of abstaining from debate on Reconstruction measures and voted in silence with his party on the necessary bills which were brought in to complete the process in those states which had defaulted in 1868. He also voted for the proposed Fifteenth Amendment, which was forced through, although scarcely in strict accord with the Republican platform on which the election of 1868 had been carried.

But when the Reconstruction question was raised in such a way as almost to break up the counting of the electoral vote, Garfield abandoned silence. Congress had provided that the electoral vote of Georgia, which had been cast on the wrong day, should be announced "in the alternative form" *i.e.*, since the result did not depend on the Georgia vote, it should neither be counted nor thrown out. But on February 9 Butler, with a group of followers, tried to force the exclusion of the Georgia vote on the ground that the state legislature had shut out negroes from office-holding. When Wade, president of the Senate, felt compelled to announce the vote as provided by the two Houses, Butler turned the whole affair into an uproar by trying to stop the count and force the Senate to withdraw. Defeated in this effort, Butler introduced a resolution in the House to the effect that the action of Wade was "a gross act of oppression and an invasion of the rights and privileges of the House." A savage debate followed, for the Ohio members rallied to Wade's defense;

¹ *Cong. Globe*, 40 Cong., 2 sess., p. 1933.

² *Ibid.*, p. 3030.

but after it had run off on parliamentary technicalities for a while Garfield took the floor, to administer a perfectly dignified but severe castigation of Butler, not by name, but in unmistakable language.

"We have heard it said that there was great excitement here, a great turbulence, an unseemly performance, a shameful scene. I admit it and deplore the fact. . . . But I appeal to the memory and conscience of every man in this House to say who inaugurated the unseemly performance? . . . Was it not the theatrical attitude, the ferocity of manner and the disorderly utterances of those who thought they might by clamor, uproar and disorder prevent the execution of the law by the President of the Senate? Did not the shameful scene originate with members who made use of expressions like these?" (Here he quoted directly from Butler's language in the *Congressional Globe*, demanding that the Senate retire and asserting "we certainly have the right to clear the Hall of interlopers.") "It was language like this," continued Garfield, "it was a manner and bearing of unparalleled insolence; it was the fell spirit of disorder—that spirit that prefers 'to reign in Hell rather than serve in heaven' that would bring chaos into this sacred Hall where order and calm deliberation should forever dwell."¹

Butler retorted, evidently thoroughly enjoying the interchange of vituperation: "To my friend from Ohio, who, smarting a little under the failure of his defence of the regular army, has chosen to arraign my motives and send me to the country branded in parliamentary language as being actuated with 'the spirit of hell.' I have only to say, 'out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.' " (Great laughter.) And thereafter when Garfield spoke he would query, "Is that the spirit of hell?"² But in spite of Butler's ability to raise a laugh the House was tired of the whole matter and the next day laid Butler's resolution on the table, 130 to 55.

Some of Garfield's comments on Butler at this juncture may be noted. To Governor Hayes of Ohio he remarked

¹ *Cong. Globe*, 40 Cong., 3 sess., p. 1104.

² *Ibid.*, p. 1147.

(February 22): "Unless our party keep a constant watch of that gentleman and some other men who partake of his revolutionary spirit, the next administration will have more trouble than it can well bear. In his attempt to prevent the election he was terribly beaten, but not until he had raised sufficient uproar to disgrace the House and the Country." In similar tone he wrote to McDowell (February 26), "Butler has suffered a succession of defeats that would make any other man retire from the contest; but he is happily as devoid of sensibility as he is of conscience."

It was in the first session of this Congress that Garfield, speaking and acting as a mere private member, made his first independent campaign for sound finances, and in so doing made his strongest impression on Congress and on the country. He showed his colors at the very start when, on December 7, Schenck, from the Committee on Ways and Means, introduced and demanded a vote without debate upon a bill prohibiting any further retirement of greenbacks under the act of 1866. Garfield, unable to "debate" under the rules, asked this skillful question of Schenck: "I wish to know if I am to understand . . . that they propose to settle this great question of financial policy under the operation of the previous question and without debate? . . . I ask him if it is proposed to revoke and overturn the declared financial policy of Congress which has been followed during the last three years without debate?"¹ In reply Schenck intimated that the mind of the House was made up and no debate was necessary. Garfield tried to get the resolution recommitted but was left in a small minority, and the resolution was then adopted by the overwhelming vote of 127 to 32. Commenting on the fact that nearly one hundred of the same members were present of those who on December 8, 1865, had voted 144 to 6 in favor of contraction, Garfield said in great disgust to Hinsdale (December 15), "I am glad to have the opportunity of standing up against a rabble of men who hasten to make weathercocks of themselves."

During the winter the agitation increased throughout the West and Congress was bombarded with petitions, while

¹ *Cong. Globe*, 40 Cong., 2 sess., p. 70.

members introduced inflationist bills and uttered paper-money sentiments; but until the Committee on Ways and Means should act the issue was not definitely joined. It presently appeared that Ohio was the storm center for green-back sentiment, not merely among Democrats, but in the Republican party and in Garfield's own district, where Cadwell, his rival of 1866, was again at work, seeking to contest the nomination. In March, to Garfield's displeasure, came the news that the Ohio State Republican Convention had adopted resolutions approving the stopping of contraction, calling for the payment of bonds "in the currency of the country which may be a legal tender," and expressing the "belief that the issue of currency should be commensurate with the industrial and business interests of the country."¹ He wrote to Hinsdale (March 8) that they embodied "financial doctrines that I cannot and will not endorse. If my constituents approve them they cannot approve me."

At this juncture, when nearly all the Ohio representatives favored inflation and Sherman was wavering, Garfield determined on a bold stroke, through making a carefully prepared speech, covering the whole field of the currency and proclaiming his own principles. His letters show that he read it over in advance to highly competent critics and gained their approval. "I have read this to D. A. Wells," he reported, May 7, "and he is more enthusiastic than I have ever seen him before. He says no one else has reached anything near the fullness and strength. I also read it to Sec. McCulloch. He thinks I have not treated the Democrats quite justly, but he said to Wells that it was the ablest exhibit of the subject he had ever seen."

On May 15 Garfield took the floor and delivered this speech, which, as written out with figures and tables, was the longest address he ever made, covering thirty-seven pages in his collected writings.² It was an exceedingly solid piece of work, embodying a compact but full analysis of the effect of war conditions and war finances upon the economic life of the country and pointing out the absurdity of focusing

¹ *Annual Cyclopaedia*, 1868, p. 604.

² *Works of James A. Garfield*, Vol. I, pp. 283-321.

attention upon the paper currency as the sole cause of the apparent "prosperity" of 1863-1865. "This industrial revolution," he asserted, "has been governed by laws beyond the reach of Congress. No legislation could have arrested it at any stage of its progress."¹ Then with great care he analyzed the condition of the currency and dwelt upon the historic examples of inflation in the past and its unescapable consequences, including the inevitability of deflation. He concluded by offering a plan for the resumption of specie payment by a series of steps, the premium on the gold dollar to go down one cent per month, until by January, 1871, paper and gold should be exchangeable at par. This he based on a somewhat similar plan actually adopted by Great Britain in 1819. Throughout the speech, he employed the most direct, plain argument and persuasion, without denunciation or emotional rhetoric except in one place where he spoke with considerable sarcasm of the mad schemes of recent converts to paper money, notably Pendleton, aspirant for the Democratic nomination, who in 1862 had declared the legal tenders unconstitutional, but now urged paying off all the debt in them.

In this speech Garfield scored a success of a kind new in his career, not as uttering an eloquent oration, but as furnishing a positive contribution to the analysis of the chief pending problem. The *Nation*, for instance, while not ready to approve his specific plan, gave high praise to the speech as a whole and still higher praise to the tone and mental attitude of the speaker. "General Garfield's speech," it said (June 4, 1868, p. 445) "is not the speech of a mere theorist or doctrinaire. . . . He has recognized the need of 'patient examination of facts' . . . and he has that wisdom, so rare among the people of this country, of being willing to 'consent to be instructed by the experience of other nations.' "

The reception of the speech was almost as much a surprise as a satisfaction to Garfield himself. Writing to Rhodes (May 18), he said: "I spoke on Friday, nearly two hours. I did not read but followed the general line of the printed speech. Notwithstanding the excitement and anxiety with

¹ *Works of James A. Garfield*, Vol. I, p. 292.

which the shadow of impeachment filled every member, I had the undivided attention of the best minds in the House. Schenck said when I had finished that it would make me a greater reputation than all I had ever done in Congress before. Of course it is not possible that such a speech can be popular in the usual sense of that word, but the comments which have been made upon it here and by the press are very gratifying." A few days later he added: "I am surprised at the widespread impression in favor of the speech. I am receiving a large pile of letters daily in regard to it and in many there is the most extravagant praise. Colfax has made some comments which seem to indicate a consciousness of the character of his conduct in the make-up of the Committees."

This speech served two purposes: as part of the currency debate in Congress it was intended to help strengthen sound money sentiment; but it was also a defiance to the inflationists in Ohio and a challenge to his opponents in the nineteenth district. That he had little congressional support from Ohio did not intimidate him, but when, on May 20, the Republican National Convention at Chicago adopted a plank squarely in keeping with his principles, it gave him intense satisfaction. It furnished him solid ground in his contest against the party in his own state. "I think I shall have easy sailing in the next convention," he wrote Rhodes (May 25), "unless B. F. W. shall be put on the course. Even then I think I could be successful. I am inclined to think that my speech would have hurt me in the Dist. but for two things—the general applause with which it was received by the press, and the noble vindication which my financial principles met at the Chicago convention. I am delighted with that brave and noble platform, in such refreshing contrast with the ambiguous and cowardly utterances of the Ohio State Convention. I rejoice that I am on the record as having repudiated the financial part of it." He wrote to Schurz, June 11: "The country owes you a debt of gratitude for your work at Chicago, not only for keeping much folly and passion out of the platform but for getting into it some noble and honest resolutions on which thinking men can stand. I

had repudiated the cowardly and ambiguous resolutions of our state convention and your work came up to my support in a most handsome manner."

The only possible competitor who stood any show against Garfield in his district was B. F. Wade, a resident of Ashtabula, who might conceivably be willing to return to the House after the end of his senatorial term. Garfield settled this possibility by going to Wade and asking him directly if he were a candidate, offering, as a younger man, to withdraw in his favor. Wade replied with equal frankness that he was not a candidate, and in spite of all efforts of Garfield's opponents he would not budge from that position. Of this episode Garfield wrote to a constituent (L. W. Hall, June 10), "I do not make this offer because I believed he could beat me, for I did not so believe, but because I sympathized with him for the defeats he had suffered. . . . I do not know of many men," he added, "situated as I am, who would have made the offer."

After this danger was removed Garfield refused to return to the district, confining his campaigning to writing many letters to supporters in various parts of the counties and furnishing copies of his speeches on the currency, the tariff and Reconstruction. He explained to Austin (June 21): "I am unwilling to go home merely to work for myself. . . . My policy may be wrong but it has been this: To secure the support of my constituents by doing my duty here in such a manner as to honor the District and myself . . . rather than by palaver and begging them to give me their votes. . . . This is the only way for me to preserve self-respect." When the convention met it proved that he was right, for he was renominated 118 to 28. "This was a handsome endorsement," he wrote, "considering I have been so little in the district."

The great financial bills came up together toward the end of the session and Garfield, in pursuance of his fixed policy, devoted his energies to supporting Schenck, who proved, at this juncture, far more conservative than he had feared. The tax bill was debated in June and Garfield found plenty of opportunity to make brief speeches and use his utmost skill

with the House rules to assist in fighting off amendments for taxing the Federal bonds and repealing the tax on state bank notes. On June 13, for instance, he made an effective argument against the last proposal by pointing out that in 1821, when the federal treasury had a balance of twenty-two millions in state bank notes, it could not get as much as \$500,000 representing solvent banks and had to negotiate a loan in order to pay interest on the public debt.¹ He did his best also to secure a lowering of the tax on whiskey, declaring the rate of two dollars a gallon to be "folly" and considering that the committee proposal of 76¼ cents "with all the opportunities that have been so long enjoyed and the skill that has been acquired by experts in fraud will be too much." The House finally voted for the figure he proposed, fifty cents.

With the tax bill out of the way, an effort was made by Moorhead of Pennsylvania—a typical protectionist—to bring up a tariff bill, but the interest of the House was focused to so great an extent upon the currency question that it was presently displaced by the loan bill and was not taken up again. While it was pending (July 13) Garfield took occasion to defend D. A. Wells, Commissioner of Revenue, who had been assailed by Moorhead as a free trader and enemy of the country's industries. He said, "It is my conviction that one of the worst things that could happen to the friends and supporters of American industry would be to pass a prohibitory tariff." Moorhead interrupted to deny that he or anyone wanted such a tariff. Garfield insisted that "the tendencies of a very considerable number of tariff men in the country are in that direction. . . . I desire to say," he went on, "that, in my judgment, it is not the best mode of defending a tariff bill to denounce every man who does not pronounce the shibboleth after our fashion as an enemy of the tariff." As for Wells, he concluded: "He does not bring us theories but facts, and while he does that we ought not to be afraid of the results of his work. For my part I am not afraid to welcome truth and to follow wherever it may lead. To shrink from such investigation is to confess that we

¹ *Cong. Globe*, 40 Cong., 2 sess., p. 3136.

have no faith in our positions. I trust every true friend of protection will welcome and challenge the fullest investigation."¹

Once more Garfield had shown himself what the extreme tariff men called "unsound"; that is, he put a desire for truth first and did not declare himself first and foremost an advocate of protection. He did not start with the necessity of protection as an article of faith and refuse to receive any so-called "facts" that did not support his creed. By his very method of stating his position he admitted that the necessity of protection was open to being proved or disproved. Such a man was not, in the Pennsylvania sense, a "tariff man."

The great effort of the inflationists was made when the loan bill came up in July. Already the temper of the House had been shown when, on June 29, a resolution instructing the Committee on Ways and Means to report "without unnecessary delay" a bill levying a tax of 10 per cent on the income of the bonds of the United States was adopted without debate by the overwhelming vote of 92 to 54. The committee obeyed, reporting such a bill on July 2, but the matter was actually fought out in connection with the general loan bill. On July 13 and 14 Butler, and Pike of Maine, led off in speeches demanding the taxation of federal bonds and making considerable use of British analogies. This delivered them into Garfield's hands, for he had mastered that field and he answered them July 15 by a speech in which he proved that both had misquoted and misinterpreted the English laws. Naturally they retorted and he found his hands full. It is interesting to see in the *Globe* how well he kept his head and how easily he handled Butler's eel-like equivocations and misstatements.²

Into a House torn with excitement Schenck brought the funding bill on July 17, and the battle began instantly against a bombardment of amendments revealing the utmost animosity to the holders of bonds,—tax exempt and paid in gold,—with Butler leading the attack, making his usual

¹ *Cong. Globe*, 40 Cong., 2 sess., p. 4013.

² *Works of James A. Garfield*, Vol. I, p. 327.

plausible and inaccurate assertions. No sooner had he sat down than Garfield was on his trail to correct his misstatements, having his proofs with him and reading them with an effect that would have been deadly upon anyone except the thick-skinned member in question. Garfield did not deny that the British public debt paid the income tax and was ready to make the refunding bonds pay the same. "There should be at least this much of a concession to meet the popular demand which we know to exist upon the subject. Let it be understood that this one tax on incomes shall apply equally to all incomes from all sources," he said,¹ but when he offered this as an amendment it was badly beaten. What the other party wanted was to tax all existing bonds hitherto exempt, and on the eighteenth Butler and his followers made that motion, involving a tax upon all holders, foreign as well as domestic. Again Garfield drove right at Butler, undaunted by his bullying manners, and appealed to the House not to disgrace the country by such an act of repudiation. After reciting the extreme damage sustained by the credit of Austria and Italy which had just tried taxing foreign bondholders he asked, "Can this country afford, as a debtor nation, to place itself even by remote analogy alongside of two bankrupt kingdoms of the old world whose honor has been stained and whose credit ruined by legislation to which this bears a close resemblance?" This time the House defeated the proposal, only a minority of Republicans voting with the Democrats.

On the bill as a whole Garfield passed extremely severe judgment in a letter he wrote that day to Edward Atkinson of Boston (July 18): "The House has gone stark mad on the funding bill. There is hardly a conceivable heresy or folly which they have not embodied in it and I shall vote against the whole thing unless I see some hope of getting it corrected in conference. We did however succeed in killing the proposition to tax the foreign holder. I am for adjourning. There can be no sensible legislation while shadows of the election are upon us." But the struggle went on for several days, in the course of which Garfield had a passage

¹ *Cong. Globe*, 40 Cong., 2 sess., Appendix, pp. 444-450.

at arms with old Thaddeus Stevens, who now asserted that the bonds of 1862 were intended to be payable in greenbacks, and said that Garfield in quoting him to the contrary was misrepresenting him. On July 23, accordingly, Garfield rose and, reading from the *Congressional Globe*, coolly and thoroughly proved that he was correct and that Stevens had asserted what was not true. The demonstration was complete and unanswerable.¹

The bill passed the House in a most unsatisfactory form, but the Senate remedied matters by striking nearly everything out beyond the minimum necessary provisions for refunding, leaving, according to Schenck, "a little bill of three sections." Glad to escape with nothing worse, Garfield voted with Schenck to accept the conference report, and thus the session ended with no disaster.

For Garfield this was one of the most important sessions in his career and it left him with a distinct feeling of triumph at its conclusion. He had made a strong fight against inflationism, had maintained a principle and had not lost his Congressional renomination, in spite of the fact that when it came to voting nearly every member west of the Appalachian Mountains was infected with paper-money heresy. He wrote to Edward Atkinson (May 17), "I am almost alone in my state and in the West generally." His speech of May 15 had won widespread recognition, his letter files were crowded with compliments and requests for copies for distribution. When he returned to Hiram he had the glow of having made his battle before a circle of applauding supporters. As one newspaper correspondent expressed it, "It was at a bound that Garfield, some days ago, placed himself equal on Sherman's specialty and took his place among the close thinkers of Congress as he was already among its most brilliant speakers."

He wrote to Hinsdale (July 31), "The long strain of the session has left me so nearly powerless that I feel like staying still indefinitely." But it was only three weeks before he was opening the autumn campaign, August 22, at Painesville, and he was thereafter on the stump until November. It

¹ *Works of James A. Garfield*, Vol. I, p. 356.

looked for a while as though the enmity of his Warren opponents might lead to a bolting nomination in his district, for on July 4 an open letter was published asking Milton Sutliff of that town to permit his name to be used, since many Republicans could not bring themselves to support Garfield. "His failure to represent the manufacturing interest of this district by a persistent Free Trade theory . . . his recent vote upon the proposed bill to levy a tax of ten per cent upon all the interest of all classes of bonds . . . evince to us that he represents Wall Street . . . better than he does the people of the XIX district." Garfield welcomed this opportunity for a direct contest. "I will, if my friends consent," he wrote Howells (July 25), "challenge him to a joint discussion of his greenback and other financial doctrines," but on returning to Ohio he found it, as he said (August 8), only "a crazy effort of a few sore-headed men in Warren and Youngstown," and it presently died out. In fact, when the election came, Garfield drew practically the full party vote.

In the campaign Garfield devoted his entire energy to debating the financial issues involved, giving only minor attention to the Reconstruction issue and saying practically nothing about Grant, the Republican candidate. After the most unremitting efforts he recorded in his journal: "Nov. 3 Great Republican victory. I have spoken 66 times in the late election and have in no case, I believe, used any low or unworthy arguments. My vote in the 19th Dist. was Garfield 20,187; McEwen 9,759." Thus was he vindicated and the inflationist and protectionist enemies proved powerless.

After the usual short rest, he was back in Washington once more for the remaining short session of the Fortieth Congress. On the financial side the election had cleared the air marvelously, so much so that when Johnson in his last annual message inserted an argument for taxing bonds, and Boutwell brought in a resolution condemning this as repudiation, the same House which had instructed the Ways and Means Committee to bring in a bill for that purpose now voted the exact reverse without a murmur, 135 to 29. It was hardly to be expected that this Congress should in its few

remaining months take steps for specie resumption, but the chastened Republicans did manage to carry through a "bill to strengthen the public credit," on which Garfield made a brief but very energetic speech.

Again in this session Garfield had an opportunity to set forth his views on the tariff when W. D. Kelley of Pennsylvania moved to strike out an appropriation to print the annual report of D. A. Wells, the Commissioner of Revenue, on the ground that it contained unpatriotic statements. It appeared that Wells concluded, after a study of wages and prices, that labor was less well paid relatively in 1868 than in 1860. This Kelley denounced with all the energy of an infuriated protectionist who insisted that American labor *must* be better off on account of the tariff.

Garfield came to the defense of Wells. "The gentleman asks this House," he said, "to make a humiliating confession, in which I for one, am not ready to join. If any theories of mine can be damaged by facts, so much the worse for my theories. It seems to me that the gentleman gives away his case, abandons his ground of attack when he starts out by admitting the general correctness of the figures." Again and again he persisted in forcing the absurdity of Kelley's position upon him. "Has the gentleman impeached the correctness of the Commissioner's facts? Not at all. He even admits them. It must be then that he refuses to print this report because its facts and deductions do not square with his theories and notions." Garfield then brought in additional data which wholly corroborated Wells's figures and strengthened his conclusion.¹

The political prominence that Garfield had acquired by this time is shown by the fact that his name was not infrequently mentioned as a possible successor to Colfax as Speaker of the House, the latter having been elected Vice-President. Since the next Congress was to meet on March 4, under the law of 1867, the matter had to be settled at once. Garfield wrote to Sheldon (December 17): "In regard to the Speakership, it looks as though it will be conceded to the East in which case I go for Blaine. If it comes West I think

¹ *Cong. Globe*, 40 Cong., 3 sess., p. 454.

it could easily be brought to me, but I am not sure that I want it. I would rather be Chairman of Ways and Means than Speaker. If Schenck goes into the cabinet I think I should be Chairman. If not, he will probably be. He ought to be." By a month later he was writing squarely that he was not a candidate and that Blaine was the right person. Apparently the two men came to some kind of agreement between themselves, for in a letter of March 11 Garfield mentioned to Blaine "the frank and cordial understanding we had about the Speakership and my cordial and loyal support of you." When Congress met, accordingly, Blaine was chosen to fill Colfax's place.

One of Blaine's principal duties was to appoint committees, and this he succeeded in doing in the course of the session, which lasted only from March 4 to April 10. There is among Garfield's papers a letter to Blaine, dated March 11, which apparently was never sent, but which reveals that the new Speaker inspired in his friend a certain lack of confidence which was to persist to the end of their relations. Garfield had called but had been unable to see Blaine, yet had noticed Colfax being admitted when he was turned off. This seemed for the moment to give color to some rumors in regard to Blaine's intentions, and led Garfield to write "that while my tastes lead me to financial rather than military legislation, yet I shall regard a displacement of myself from a chairmanship of a standing committee of the House as a personal and official degradation to which you have no right to subject me without previous consultation." In this case Garfield's sudden uneasiness was proved to be unjustified, for when the list was announced he found himself transferred from the Committee on Military Affairs to the Committee on Currency and Banking, which was much more congenial to his tastes. Oddly enough, he has not left a word of comment on this shift of position.

The work of this short session, although a new Congress, was virtually the completion of what had been begun in the preceding winter. The principal financial step was to pass the act to strengthen the public credit which Johnson had killed by refusing to sign it. This time Garfield was defeated

in the effort to retain the section authorizing gold contracts, voting in the minority when it was struck out 86 to 57. He voted also for the legislation necessary to secure the completion of the Reconstruction of Virginia, Mississippi and Texas, the other matter of importance. When the session ended, the work of the winter might be regarded as finished and the transition accomplished to the new administration.

So ended for Garfield an eventful period, a period of disappointments and defeats in legislation, so far as positive progress was concerned, but with no ground lost to the forces which at one time seemed to threaten ruin to all that he regarded as sound and honorable in government and finance. Garfield himself felt that he had made great strides forward toward leadership in the House, and this in spite of the fact that he had represented the minority in every important bill debated and had supported every one that did pass not as his ideal but as an escape from something worse.

There can be little doubt that Garfield was correct in this feeling. It did not matter that he was not on the financial committees, and that he was defeated in the principal enterprise of his own committee; he had taken a strong, clear position in debate on what he considered vital points, and had made a strong battle, even if defeated. His parliamentary methods showed a distinct improvement over anything he had manifested before; he was more cautious in utterance, less inclined to ride for a fall—win or lose—and increasingly master of his temper and his speech. In this session he had repeated encounters with Butler, one of the most irritating and offensive of individuals, who was his principal antagonist on matters both financial and military. It is interesting to see the contrast between the men, Butler trying always to score off Garfield by a personal slur or insult, Garfield invariably fastening on the shortcomings in Butler's arguments and paying slight notice to personalities. He was playing for the support of members of the House by persuasion and argument, not by abuse of his antagonist.

His speech of May 15, 1868, had been for him a stroke of boldness that carried his reputation beyond the walls of the House and the boundaries of the nineteenth district, or even

the United States, for in the year 1869 he was elected an honorary member of the famous Cobden Club of Great Britain, along with such Americans as C. F. and J. Q. Adams, Edward Atkinson, Henry Ward Beecher, Bryant, Emerson, Garrison and Sumner. Some years later, when the Cobden Club had become the object of deadly suspicions on the part of protectionists as an institution for the propagation of "British free trade," Garfield explained his membership as follows (J. M. Nash, Youngstown, May 23, 1874): "In 1868 I delivered a speech in Congress against the Democratic doctrine of repudiation. . . . The then secretary of the Treasury suggested to me to send the speech to our ministers in England and France as it would aid in strengthening the public credit at home and abroad and tend to quiet the fears that the nation was in danger of repudiating its obligations. A few copies were sent to each of these officers and a few months thereafter I received a letter informing me that I had been elected a member of the Cobden Club, a society organized for the promotion of financial science. That was the first I had ever heard of the existence of such an organization." After giving a list of the eminent Americans elected at the same time he went on, "I doubt if the opinions of any of these gentlemen were ever inquired into in relation to the tariff. Certainly no such inquiry was made of me. I was elected, as I understand, as a compliment for the speech I delivered on the currency and credit of the United States."

It was during the winter of 1869 that a new political question was forced upon Garfield's notice, that of the spoils system and the necessity for its reform. Hitherto he had accepted the management of offices as one of the necessary nuisances of his position, but after the election of 1868 he found himself aghast at the sudden uprising of a demand for a clean sweep. At first he wrote letter after letter to office-seekers pointing out that Johnson still had three months to serve and it would do no good to put pressure on Grant. "If I understand Grant's character," he wrote to one correspondent (November 10), "he will not be driven by clamor and pressure." But when Congress met he found the belief

universal that what Grant himself wanted was a free hand with spoils, and on January 11, with no debate, the House rushed through a bill, 121 to 47, repealing outright the Tenure-of-Office Act. Garfield, who had voted in the minority wrote to Hinsdale (January 11): "There are some painful developments of human nature in the members of the Congress which are to me exceedingly unlovely. For instance that apparently severe virtue which has been denouncing Johnson . . . and has insisted on limiting his power . . . because the patronage he controlled was too great to put into the hands of any man:—that virtue is now shown to have been not virtue but passion and selfishness; for nearly every man who roared so loudly on these themes is now making an equal effort to sound the praises of Grant and do anything they may think will please him." Under such circumstances Jenckes's Civil Service Bill was doomed to defeat. Garfield wrote of it to a correspondent, "It is a rare thing to see men voluntarily resign power and I begin to fear that this lust for influence will destroy a most worthy measure." The bill was beaten without a roll call.

After Grant was inaugurated the office-seekers descended upon Washington like a flood and the demand for the complete repeal of the Tenure-of-Office Act arose from every quarter. It was intimated that Grant himself would make no removals unless the act was first repealed so as to leave him with a free hand, and the matter was promptly brought up in Congress, the House once more passing a bill for a complete repeal, the Senate insisting on retaining some part of the original plan. Garfield supported the Senate and had the satisfaction of defeating an absolutely unqualified repeal. Speaking on March 26, he rehearsed the history of the act and dwelt upon the interpretation placed on it by the House in voting Johnson's impeachment, and by nearly a two-thirds majority of the Senate in voting on that article of impeachment which rested on the violation of the Tenure-of-Office Act. He contended that the action then taken committed the Congress to the position that the President had no "power of removal" except as conferred by statute, and he urged that instead of repealing the law, leaving to the

President a discretion which was not based on any constitutional power but on usage, the matter of removals should be kept under the control of the Senate. "When we have, as we now have," he said, "an Administration coming into power and finding in public positions hundreds of unfit men, put there by the partisan violence of the preceding Administration; when, as now, there ought to be a general cleansing of the offices, I admit that there ought to be a repeal of some of the severer provisions of this law. . . . But as I said before, never by my vote shall Congress give up the constitutional principle and allow to any one man, be he an angel from heaven, the absolute and sole control of appointments to and removals from office in this country."¹ Here again he found Butler and Logan leading the opposition and demanding a complete repeal, that Grant might have a free hand. The House followed them by 99 to 70, but the Senate refused to yield and the conference committee agreed on a compromise which still permitted the Senate to keep a check on removals.

While this was going on Garfield suddenly found himself involved personally in a problem of presidential spoils of the most embarrassing character. According to his usual custom he had ascertained that A. K. Robinson was favored for postmaster by the majority of Republicans in the town of Ravenna in his district, and, following the usage, he sent in his name to the Post Office Department. But on March 17 he learned to his amazement that Grant had assumed to treat the office as a matter of personal spoils and had appointed a Mrs. Evans to please his father, Jesse Grant, who had known her mother thirty years before. Garfield immediately wrote to Sherman asking to have the nomination defeated—"1. Because the nominee appears to be totally unfit. 2. Because her appointment is not asked for by a single person. 3. Because the interference of a person wholly unconnected with my district is subversive of the just responsibility of its representative and destructive of his legitimate influence."

He then called upon Grant and reported to Sherman (March 18): "He at once said he would not have nominated Mrs. Evans if he had known what I told him. He requested

¹ *Cong. Globe*, 40 Cong., 1 sess., pp. 315-318.

me to say to you that if you saw fit to suspend action on the case and advise him to withdraw the nomination he would do so, but he did not like to withdraw it on his own motion." Sherman was not inclined to assist Grant, so he did nothing, and ultimately, on March 24, Garfield yielded, to relieve Grant from the embarrassment of refusing a request from his own father. In writing to an indignant resident of Ravenna on the matter he observed (April 8): "It would be a great relief to me if the President would take the sole charge of all the Post offices in my district. No more thankless task was ever imposed upon a representative than that of acting in Post Office contests, but I do not hesitate to say that I think it injudicious to allow a person not connected with the district to take the management of such a matter in the way Jesse R. Grant has done in this."

Garfield's best statement of the general situation was in a letter to Captain Plumb (March 27, 1869). "We are in deep water," he wrote, "and struggling stoutly to keep our heads a little above the surface. Gen'l Grant has been making and is making very bad mistakes. The traditional hostility of the Army to politicians he has inherited in a large measure, and he seems to have mistaken the meaning of the word 'politician.' He certainly would not think of organizing an army and making up its roster of officers from men without military experience and yet he seems to think that this great civil machine can be run without the aid of men skilled in civil service. He is no doubt actuated by the very laudable desire to put honest men in office. He has sought for them, first, within the circle of his own acquaintances. Politically that has been a narrow circle, and of course comprises his personal and family friends. His first efforts therefore have laid him open to the charge of nepotism and some of his appointments made by the advice of his father (a weak, vain old man) have been unfortunate ones—some of them very bad.

"The wheels of the new government creak and the whole machine moves heavily, but I still have hope that the native good sense of General Grant will lead him out of his difficulties; and that, like Lincoln, he will grow in his place and be

a better president a year from now than he is today. The rush for office is absolutely appalling; it would almost seem that the adult population of the United States had moved on the works of the government and were determined to carry every position by storm."

Garfield's letter-files for these months are crowded with applications for his help in getting offices; among others was D. Cadwell, who had twice tried to defeat him for re-nomination, and now wished his aid in getting a place in the diplomatic service. Garfield good-humoredly did what he could.¹

It was undoubtedly as a result of his experiences at this time that Garfield showed himself in the following years a strong advocate of reform in the Civil Service. In the next session of Congress, when speakers were complaining of inefficiency in the federal administration, he declared that the members of Congress were themselves to blame for the conditions they criticised. "We do all this ourselves," he said, "we go man by man to the heads of these several departments and say 'Here is a friend of mine; give him a place.' We press such appointments upon the Departments; we crowd the doors; we fill the corridors; Senators and Representatives throng the offices and Bureaus until the public business is obstructed, the patience of officers is worn out, and sometimes for fear of losing their places by our influence they at last give way and appoint men, not because they are fit for the positions but because we ask it. There, Mr. Chairman, is the true field for retrenchment and reform. . . . I believe we can at almost half the present cost manage all these Departments better than they are now managed if we adopt a judicious system of civil service." He concluded by urging support to Mr. Jenckes's Civil Service Bill when it should come up.²

A little later, when a case of corruption in the appointment of naval cadets by a Congressman was under discussion, he urged the adoption of the competitive examination system which his predecessor Hutchins had established, and

¹ B. F. Wade, April 9, 1869.

² *Works of James A. Garfield*, Vol. I, p. 499.

he had continued, pointing out that "no one of the cadets who have been appointed from my district since I have been a member of the House has fallen below the first third in his class, and much less has one been rejected. . . . We shall not have done our duty unless we go to the bottom of this matter and place all the appointments to the Academies on similar ground."¹

Garfield had high hopes for the session of 1869-1870, which was preceded by a Republican success in Ohio, the party reëlecting Hayes by an increased majority and recapturing control of the legislature. With his chairmanship of the Committee on Currency and Banking as a basis, he felt that he would be in a position to play a strong part in financial matters. The membership of the new Congress showed that it belonged to a new generation. Stevens was dead, Colfax now Vice-President; Wilson of Iowa, Spalding, Delano, Shellabarger and Ashley of Ohio failed to return; Windom had entered the Senate. Boutwell was now Secretary of the Treasury, E. B. Washburne minister to France.

Of the new members destined to play a large part in affairs, there might be named Aaron Sargent of California, long Garfield's committee colleague; G. W. McCrary of Iowa, who filled Wilson's place; O. D. Conger of Michigan, E. Hale of Maine and G. F. Hoar of Massachusetts; and, from Ohio, William Upson, Garfield's neighbor in the eighteenth district. Other members who stirred Garfield's war memories were his old colleague in the Forty-second Regiment, L. D. Sheldon, now a carpet-bag representative from Louisiana, and General J. S. Negley with whom, as division commander of the Army of the Cumberland, Garfield had been intimate. He now came to join General John Beatty, who had been one of his brigade commanders.

On the Democratic side the leaders of the previous Congresses, Holman, Niblack, Brooks, Beck and Knott, were strengthened by the return of Voorhees, "the tall sycamore of the Wabash," and "Sunset Cox," the latter now hailing from New York; and the appearance of an able New York member, Clarkson N. Potter.

¹ *Works of James A. Garfield*, Vol. I, p. 503.

It is not to be wondered at that Blaine had taken counsel with Colfax in making out his committee list, for his task was a difficult one. No less than five or six of the most important committees had to have new chairmen and the aspirants were exceedingly numerous. The outcome was to promote or shift about half a dozen men. Dawes took Stevens's place as chairman of the Committee on Appropriations, while Garfield, as has been seen, replaced Pomeroy as chairman of the Committee on Currency and Banking. Paine of Wisconsin became chairman of the Committee on Elections, so long headed by Dawes; Bingham, a veteran, succeeded Wilson at the head of the Judiciary Committee, but Logan and Butler, two newcomers, broke into the order of promotion by striding to the front, the former becoming in his second term chairman of the Committee on Military Affairs, the latter heading a Committee on Reconstruction, besides standing next to Bingham on the Judiciary Committee. Only six of the leading committees were still headed by men who antedated the Civil War; the new generation had arrived. And with Blaine, who had entered with Garfield and whose progress was the most rapid of any, as Speaker there could be no doubt of the control by younger men.

One of the newcomers, G. F. Hoar of Massachusetts, has left his impression of the leadership in this body. In speaking of the strong position held by Dawes he said: "There has never been, within my experience, a greater power than his on the floor of the House. He had mighty antagonists. There were not only very able Democrats, like Randall and Kerr and Holman, but there were mighty leaders among the Republicans. There was little party discipline. Each of them seemed bent on having his own way and taking care of himself and ready to trip up or overthrow any of his rivals without mercy or remorse. Among them were Butler and Farnsworth and Garfield and Logan and Schenck and Kelley and Banks and Bingham and Sargent and Blaine and Poland."¹

To the session now beginning Garfield looked hopefully for important legislation along the lines where his interests lay, in the different fields of finance. To a correspondent he

¹ *Autobiography*, Vol. I, p. 203.

wrote (November 30): "What we want is courage and promptness in meeting the financial difficulty. This winter offers the golden opportunity. If we postpone it still further, the shadow of the presidential election will invade us and make sensible and thorough legislation impossible. All good men should use their influence with the members of Congress to impress upon them the necessity of early and courageous action on this subject."¹ But before attacking any of the problems which, he felt, demanded a prompt solution, he found himself, to his surprise and regret, compelled to undertake a repellent duty. On December 13 a resolution of the House required him, as chairman of the Committee on Currency and Banking, to investigate the episode known as "Black Friday," the famous exploit in which Jay Gould and Jim Fisk had endeavored to "corner" gold in October 1869. What rendered it a delicate matter was the fact that rumor involved the President of the United States in the discreditable affair. Garfield wrote to Hinsdale an account of his first steps (January 10). "To carry on the investigation," he said, "required an amount of expert knowledge of the ways of Wall St. which I did not possess and so the Committee authorized me to go on to N. Y. privately and reconnoitre the field. I did so and for nine days I pushed my observations every day and until a late hour every night. It has been a strange and curious work, but I think I now know how to commence and whom to summon. The investigation will lead us to examine the dens of the Gold Room, some of the offices of the Sub-Treasury at New York and perhaps will lead us into the parlour of the President. I don't think it will touch him, but it may a member of his family."

The examination of persons involved was now begun and continued for weeks at a stretch. On January 21 Garfield asked permission for the committee to sit during sessions of the House. On February 10 he incidentally remarked that the committee had sat "every secular day since and including the 15th of January last." His letters reveal his amazement at the testimony he heard. "I am up to my eyes," he wrote to McDowell (January 18), "in the gold panic investigation.

¹ N. B. Wilson, November 30.

The abysses of wickedness which are opening before us in the investigation are among the most remarkable things I have met." A week later he wrote (Hall, January 25): "Its developments are among the most frightful exhibitions of rascality I have ever seen. The whole subject has a curious dramatic interest connected with its wickedness." When, on March 20, the committee made its report, Garfield presented, in addition to the analysis written by himself, no less than four hundred pages of evidence which displayed to the world a state of facts fully justifying the language in his letters.¹ His analysis has served as the basis for all subsequent treatment of this episode by historians and essayists and its contents are comparatively well known. It showed, in brief, that Gould and Fisk, in trying to "corner" gold and force up the premium, relied heavily upon an intrigue conducted through Grant's brother-in-law, A. R. Corbin, the object of which was to induce Grant to prevent any sales of gold by the Treasury while the two gamblers were carrying through their operation. Garfield did not spare epithets. He referred to Gould as the "guilty plotter of all these criminal proceedings"² and he remarked of Fisk: "It appears that nothing but the scent of corruption could sharpen the appetite of Fisk for the game which his leader was pursuing. His own testimony on this point exhibits his singular depravity."³

Almost more staggering than the unscrupulous plotting of Gould and the astounding effrontery of Fisk was the revelation of the President's moral obtuseness. In no case was he found saying or doing anything which could suggest connivance with Fisk or any comprehension of what was on foot, but it was perfectly clear that Grant had no conception of the personal and moral unfitness of the company he kept. The curious density of the national hero on that side already exhibited in his appointments to office and in his amazing San Domingo policy, was again startlingly exhibited to the world. Yet Grant seems to have approved Garfield's methods of treating the affair. "I may say," wrote Garfield (June

¹ *House Reports*, No. 81, 41 Cong., 2 sess.

² *Ibid.*, p. 14.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

20), "that the President expresses himself under a good many obligations to me for the management of the Gold Panic investigation."

With this heavy labor concluded, Garfield was ready to turn to positive legislation, but with his high hopes of the opening of the session sadly dashed by what occurred on February 21, when a resolution, introduced by Ingersoll of Illinois, instructing his committee to report a bill for increasing the issue of banknotes by fifty millions, passed the House without debate 108 to 72. The House in December had voted 124 to 1, on Garfield's motion, a resolution condemning "the proposition to repudiate any portion of the debt of the United States as unworthy the honor and good name of the nation," the Democrats abstaining. This removed any fear of bond taxing or bond redemption in greenbacks, but the vote of February 21 showed that the desire for more currency was still powerful. Any banking bill that he should introduce would be compelled to carry an increase in banknotes, something he was opposed to, so long as the greenbacks were below par. As for the prospect of specie resumption, it became plain, as the session went on, that Schenck's committee had no intention of making any proposal looking in that direction.

It was in June that Garfield finally brought forward a banking bill, although, as he had written to various people, he felt that the sentiment of the House was so divided that the outlook was not promising. In his opening speech he adopted a conciliatory tone and some of his words at the opening may be quoted as illustrating how he had learned to change his tactics of 1866, when he was not ready to compromise until after a defeat. "Having my own cherished and decided opinions," he said, "and having frequently announced them here, I find it impossible to realize my ideas in any bill that can have the least possible chance of passing in this House. Under circumstances like these it became the duty of the Committee . . . to prepare a bill to meet, as far as possible, the manifest demands of the country."¹ In other words the bill itself was a compromise.

¹ *Cong. Globe*, 41 Cong., 2 sess., p. 4176.

Assuming that it was the desire of the majority in the House to increase the banknotes by fifty millions, and that it was the well-known and equally strong desire of the Senate to prevent any increase, he proposed to retire \$45,000,000 of 3 per cent certificates and cancel \$39,000,000 of greenbacks, while issuing \$95,000,000 of banknotes to those states, chiefly western and southern, where there seemed to be an insufficient quantity. Thus while increasing currency with one hand he would contract it with the other and the main result would be a redistribution.¹

This bill was promptly defeated. Members rose on all sides offering amendments of every description, and great antagonism was shown toward the proposed contraction. Desirous to bring matters to a quick decision, Garfield and his committee demanded the previous question on all amendments, and called first for a vote upon a substitute framed by Allison. This led to a peculiar circumstance, for the Speaker decided that, under the rules, if the substitute were adopted none of the other twenty-odd amendments could be voted on except as they added new matter to the bill. So many members were rendered indignant by this situation that a majority composed of extreme inflationists and of Easterners, feeling little interest in a measure whose sole effect would be to add banknotes to the western states, voted to adjourn 79 to 75, a motion which under the circumstances virtually killed the bill. Garfield wrote humorously to a correspondent (V. P. Kline, June 11): "I have never seen the time when opinions on finances seemed to be so distracted. The various parties have collided and Congress is the scene of the smash-up. Two western trains pushing eastward, one carrying Pendleton and his greenback theory and the other the inflation doctrines of the Northwest have at the same moment collided with each other and with the National Banks, Specie Payments, the state bank interest and finally with the Supreme court and here we are in the most admired disorder. No one can predict the outcome except that any bill offered under these circumstances is likely to be defeated."

¹ *Works of James A. Garfield*, Vol. I, p. 545.

But this defeat was almost immediately retrieved. In a letter to a member of his committee who happened to be away from Washington (W. C. Smith, June 11, 1870), Garfield described what happened: "I found on reaching the House next morning that there was great indignation among the members who were absent the previous evening. I did not expect any action to be taken on our bill but they gathered round me in great numbers and I found that it was necessary to satisfy their wishes that another trial should be made. The Western and Southern members feel that they have been sacrificed by the East with the aid of the Democracy. Very unexpectedly my committee was called and during the ten minute recess taken in consequence of the storm a plan was matured in pursuance of which I reported Senate Bill No. 378 with an amendment in the nature of a substitute consisting of the 1st, 2d, 10th and 11th sections of our bill." This omitted the cancellation of greenbacks, but kept the other figures as originally planned, leaving a net increase of \$51,000,000 in banknotes. On June 14 and 15, when the bill came up, the committee made no effort to prevent amendments from being voted on, with the result that most of them were voted down and the bill passed 99 to 80.

The Senate proving unwilling, as Garfield had foreseen, to accept any such increase, there followed a deadlock between the houses, but the matter was at length compromised, the increase in banknotes standing at \$54,000,000, which in consequence of the withdrawal of the \$45,000,000 of 3 per cent notes left a net increase of only nine millions. The House accepted this July 7, by 100 to 77. Garfield wrote to a constituent (July 12): "My currency bill has gone to the President and will be signed today. It is almost exactly in the shape that it left my hands except that nine millions have been added to the amount of National Bank notes to be issued. The bill is regarded as having settled the Greenback question in this country. Henceforth the Democracy can have no opportunity for breaking up the National Bank system and substituting national currency."

What was of greater personal concern to Garfield in this session was the appearance of the tariff as a political issue

in his own district, in a way destined to have a marked effect upon his future. When Congress met in December, 1869, there was a widespread feeling that a reduction of duties was inevitable, in view of an agitation in the western states. To meet this danger the protected interests of the East, rallying with extreme energy to defend their "imperilled industries," began to put pressure upon Congressmen in hopes of defeating action, among others upon Garfield, whose Congressional district actually touched the western Pennsylvania iron and coal fields and was itself divided between an agricultural and a manufacturing section. Along the eastern edge, in the valley of the Mahoning River, there were growing up active iron industries at Youngstown, Niles and elsewhere.

For years Garfield had felt the pressure from these elements and in 1868 the opposition to him was directed not only against his "Wall Street" views on the currency but also his "Free Trade theory." It does not appear, however, that he paid much attention to it until, in the session of 1869-1870 sundry iron manufacturers of the Mahoning valley undertook to compel him to pledge support to their views. The trouble did not lie in any votes Garfield had ever cast against protection to iron or any other products. In fact, he was thoroughly committed to supporting protection wherever a domestic industry would suffer without it. It lay purely and simply in his attitude of mind. He was not interested first, last and all the time in securing protection as such; nor did he start with the assumption that the only debatable question was as to the needful amount. On the contrary, he had publicly said that if an industry did not need protection he saw no reason for giving it any. Of such a man they could not be sure. He might think they did not need it.

Garfield well appreciated the difficulties of his position. "It may perhaps be my misfortune," he wrote (July 12, 1869), "that I occupy that position which is never popular with any party, a middle ground. If I may say it without being absurd, I should claim to be theoretically a Free Trader, but practically a Protectionist. Free Trade as a doctrine of Political Science is, in most of its positions, unanswerable. But our industries have seventy or eighty years

of growth on the basis of some measure of protection, and our policy should be guided not only by scientific principles, but also with constant reference to the conditions which the policy of three quarters of a century have produced. We should aim at Free Trade and gradually approach it through a moderate and reasonable protection. Practically I find myself as much opposed to the Pennsylvania notions of prohibitive protection, as to the proposition for immediate Free Trade."

A man with such views needed, in the eyes of the iron manufacturers, a great deal of "stiffening" and they undertook to apply it at this time, by pouring letters on him containing arguments to prove their need of protection, and masses of figures to support their claims. To this Garfield took no exception, for he wanted above all the facts in the case; but when other letters adopted a bullying tone and threatened him with defeat for renomination he took fire and wrote tartly, declining to be instructed as to his duties.

When, on January 20, the Committee on Printing recommended printing seventeen thousand copies of the report of David A. Wells, Special Commissioner of the Revenue, there broke out the inevitable debate on the tariff question between violent protectionists, who resented the tone of Wells's remarks and the apparent trend of his statistics, and sundry Democrats who came to his defense. Garfield took occasion to repeat what he had said before on several occasions, but to cast it in a form which would serve as an answer to his Ohio critics. "I desire to say that I represent as large an iron interest as any other member of this House, with perhaps the exception of two or three, and I have always endeavored to defend that interest here. But if I were the enemy of the manufacturing interest of my district and of this country, I would certainly vote against printing this report . . . for I should thereby confess that I was afraid of the truth contained in that document." He then quoted figures given him by one of his constituents from Youngstown on the cost per ton of pig iron, and called attention to the fact that they differed considerably from Wells's figures, intimating that the commissioner might have been in error.

But then he went on to add, in words obviously intended for the "Mahoning Iron Men": "For myself I do not intend to cast any vote while I am a member of this House for which I do not see valid reasons. If Mr. Wells or any other man can show me that any duty on imported goods is so high as to work more injury than benefit to the country I should be unworthy this place were I not to follow my convictions."¹

Such words only added fuel to the flames in the Mahoning valley. What they wanted was a man who would reject out of hand all figures except such as they furnished. That was what a representative in Congress was for. Garfield wrote some vigorous letters to his friends in the district, setting forth his position. "What do they want?" he wrote to McLain of Warren (January 27), "that I shall rush into this question before the Committee reports a bill? To say in advance of all discussion . . . that I shall vote as they want me to without question? They must know that I am not a machine and will not consent to be one."

To Austin he wrote still more vigorously (January 31, 1870): "In the first place the manufacturers of the Mahoning valley know, unless they are wilfully perverse, that I have supported by voice and by vote, every tariff Bill that ever passed the House of Representatives during the seven years that I have been in it. Second, the fact is that some Youngstown and Niles people, in trying to beat me out of the nomination, started a story, purely for political effect, that I was opposed to the tariff interests and by their persistent falsehoods made the impression upon the minds of many in the valley that I was hostile to the manufacturing interests. . . . Whether it costs me my seat or not these men shall all know that I am not to be scared or driven in regard to any vote I give in the House. . . . The fact is, many of these men want a representative that they can own and carry around in their pantaloons pocket. . . . When the bill comes up I shall make a speech on the subject of the tariff generally. I shall give our people in the Mahoning valley the full benefit of all the facts they allege on the subject. No man is more ready than I am to hear all their arguments and facts

¹ *Cong. Globe*, 41 Cong., 2 sess., p. 623.

but when they come to denunciation I intend they shall find I do not scare worth a cent."

To make clear his reasonable regard for his constituents' interests he delivered, on April 1, a carefully prepared speech on the tariff, in the course of which he emphasized the justice of a demand for reduced tariff rates, but quoted again his own words of 1866: "Duties should be so high that our manufactures can fairly compete with foreign product, but not so high as to enable them to drive out the foreign article, enjoy a monopoly of the trade and regulate the price as they please. . . . I am for that free trade which can be achieved only through protection." In one sentence he spoke of the folly of the representative "who merely votes for the highest rates proposed in order to show on the record that he is a sound protectionist," and he warned his hearers that unless a wise reduction was now made they might be forced to undergo a violent one.¹

Garfield wrote to his political friends explaining the speech with much care. To Whitelaw Reid he said (April 4): "The speech was a dangerous one for me to make. It will greatly displease the Iron men of my district and make them hostile to me in the coming Congressional nomination. . . . While I cannot expect the "*Tribune*" to approve all the points of the speech, yet I hope it will not be thought necessary to say anything editorially which might add strength to the opposition in my district."

As he foresaw, the speech brought down instant condemnation from high protectionists in his district and elsewhere. To them a tariff to equalize competition was no tariff at all. Reid wrote to Garfield (April 5), "Greeley declares he will never forgive you and will make you regret it," and newspapers in Mahoning County came out demanding that Garfield be replaced as representative "by a gentleman who is at heart true to the *protective* tariff interests of his country."

When the iron schedules were reached, Garfield took the position that pig iron should not have a lower rate than other iron. In fact, his insistence on the equalization of iron and steel rates nettled Schenck, who on several occasions

¹ *Works of James A. Garfield*, Vol. I, p. 521.

accused him of subserviency to the interests of his district and led S. S. Cox sarcastically to interpret his position to be that "my friend from Ohio, if he cannot get the tariff reduced on these manufactured forms of iron, will do his best to steal something for his constituents in the shape of pig iron."¹ What Garfield said was, after all, a little like Cox's parody. On April 18 on the iron schedule he remarked: "The paragraph under consideration illustrates and enforces the charge I made in my speech . . . that there is no uniform, equitable principle embodied in this bill. . . . For one I shall not consent that pig iron shall be picked out of the list and reduced 22½ per cent while all the rest are either let alone or increased. . . . If gentlemen are really desirous of protecting labor itself and not capital, I ask why they propose an increase of duty on the higher grades of iron, where the capital employed exceeds in value the labor, and a lower rate on pig iron where capital is the least and labor the greatest factor?" He introduced at this point letters from his Youngstown correspondents to prove that iron cost on the average \$30.67 a ton. The *Globe* shows that he voted against a reduction of the pig iron duty from \$7 to \$5 a ton, and when, on June 4, after the general tariff bill had failed to pass the Senate, some parts of it including a duty of \$7 a ton on pig iron were moved as an amendment to the tax bill, he voted with the majority for the addition, and on June 6 for the passage of the bill.²

But no amount of support of this character could satisfy the Youngstown men. What they wanted was an out-and-out, fighting, last-ditch protectionist in Congress, and from early in the spring until July they made an active effort to find a candidate to run against Garfield for the Congressional nomination. On May 3 he wrote to a supporter: "The old opposition at Warren and Youngstown will not sleep and I shall expect all the hostility they can muster. Their chief trouble is to find a man on whom they can concentrate their votes. If Mr. Wade would consent to run he would be the most formidable antagonist they can find." Wade proved

¹ *Cong. Globe*, 41 Cong., 2 sess., p. 2768.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 2765, 2803, 3080, 3111, 3162, 3197.

as immovable in 1870 as he had been two years before and by the end of June it was clear that the effort to dislodge Garfield was a failure. "So far as I know," he wrote to Hall of Ravenna (June 30), "there is to be no organized opposition in the convention. The Iron men tried every means in their power to secure a candidate but failed. They will probably sullenly acquiesce in the inevitable." He was renominated by acclamation on July 6. This success he ascribed in large part to his speech. "The sending of about 7000 copies of my tariff speech," he told Reid (July 9), "throughout the district has produced a very marked change in the public sentiment there, and the mass of the people have [become] sharply antagonized with the extreme selfishness of the iron men and have told them in unmistakable terms that they cannot be allowed to have everything their own way. I think I am now stronger in the District than ever before."

On other public questions Garfield expressed himself from time to time but made no effort to lead. On army reduction, for instance, he let Logan, now heading the Military Committee, carry through his bill for dismissing one-half the general officers, trusting to the Senate to kill it; which did, in fact, take place. To get any bill through, Logan had to consent to a compromise which left things in such form that Garfield could vote for it. "I am glad," he said in the House (June 11), "we are about to pass a measure precisely similar to a bill which was urged by the Committee on Military affairs a year and a half ago."¹

On the Reconstruction issues still before Congress he followed his usual custom of voting with the party and saying little. He voted in silence for the admission of Virginia, January 14; Mississippi, February 3; and Texas, March 15; and for the first Enforcement Bill, May 16 and later. On the bill to admit Georgia, June 24, he observed: "I have been a listener for the last two years to what has been said on the subject of reconstruction and during that time have rarely taken part in these debates. We have now reached a critical period in our legislation when we are called upon to perform the final act, to complete, for better or for worse,

¹ *Cong. Globe*, 41 Cong., 2 sess., p. 4365.

the reconstruction policy of the government. . . . I confess that any attempt at reconciling all we have done . . . so as to form consistent precedents for any theory given of legislation is, to my mind, a failure. There are no theories for the management of whirlwinds and earthquakes."¹

Garfield's campaigning in the Congressional election was as long and arduous as ever, from August 27 to October 12, but it deserves no special comment, for political issues were quiescent, and while the Republican party lost ground as the outcome, it was regarded as normal. The figures in Garfield's district show for the first time a sharp decline in his vote, but since the diminution was equally distributed over all the counties, being in fact the greatest in Ashtabula and Geauga, it is impossible to lay it to the credit of protectionist dissatisfaction in the Mahoning valley. The Democratic vote declined in equal proportion, and the whole situation reflected the arrival of "general apathy," the bugbear of politicians, coupled with signs of the customary "mid-term slump." Nothing in Garfield's correspondence indicates that he felt himself damaged politically by the decline in Republican strength in the nineteenth district.

	Garfield	Howard
Ashtabula	3,276	965
Gauga	1,688	379
Mahoning	2,382	2,320
Portage	2,547	1,885
Trumbull	3,645	1,714
	13,538	7,263

What made this election important to Garfield were two things. First, in general, he thought he detected a movement against the high protectionists. "I have everywhere preached not Free Trade but a liberal policy of Tariff Reform," he wrote to D. A. Wells (October 20), "and these views have gained many victories. The next house will be much more

¹ *Works of James A. Garfield*, Vol. I, p. 263.

liberal than the present." On the same day he wrote to Blaine: "When I spoke on the tariff last April, many of my friends thought I had gone so far in the liberal direction as to injure myself. They now find that Ohio has gone farther than I did." In the second place, General Schenck, chairman of the Committee of Ways and Means, was defeated for reëlection by L. D. Campbell, an old ante-bellum Free Soil Whig, now running as an independent, who, according to Garfield, "made much successful capital out of the late tariff legislation and Schenck's doctrines in regard to it." (October 20, Blaine.) This meant another chance for Garfield to secure the one position in Congress that he coveted; not only that, it seemed to assure his getting it. By December 23 Garfield was able to write to Cox: "I don't think there is much doubt but that Blaine will place me at the head of Ways and Means. He has come as near saying it as he ought to, and unless outside pressure prevents he will do it, I have no doubt. Sam Bowles has just sent me an editorial in which he says I must be chairman. If our Western editors say so . . . it will put the result beyond question."

It was with high hopes, therefore, that Garfield began the last session of the Forty-first Congress, knowing that little or nothing of importance in the line of financial legislation would probably be undertaken, but feeling confident that at the opening of the next Congress, the Forty-second, he would find himself placed where he could assume control over tax and loan and tariff bills. To his distress, however, the chief questions that arose proved to be connected with the shortcomings of Grant as President and with scandals that came even closer to him than had the Black Friday investigation. Already Garfield had shown his consciousness of one of Grant's weaknesses when, in preparing an oration on the "Life and Character of General Thomas," he felt impelled to write to Reid (October 31): "I want your judgment on a delicate question. Shall I mention, in his praise, that he repeatedly refused presents in recognition of his great services? To omit it is not to come up to the full level of his truth and justice. To mention it with emphasis is—you see what." To Reid the allusion was clear, for Grant's readiness to

accept gifts was notorious, but he advised Garfield to take the risk, which he did, with no apparent evil results.

After the opening of Congress there came a succession of episodes which staggered his faith in Grant. First came the violent rupture between Grant and Sumner, arising from the effort of the former to annex San Domingo. A treaty to that purport having failed in the previous year, Grant now sent a message urging annexation by joint resolution. As a first step, resolutions for a commission to visit the island and report on the desirability of annexation were introduced into both houses, whereupon Sumner in the Senate attacked Grant's policy with unmeasured denunciation. "The San Domingo business is most unfortunate," wrote Garfield (December 30). "My sympathies are very strong with Sumner in his fight the other day, although he weakens his influence in the Senate by an arrogance of manner which frequently offends those who would otherwise be his friends." On January 10, when the resolution came to a vote in the House, Garfield joined with a considerable majority to pass it with a provision that showed the hopelessness of Grant's policy. "San Domingo," he wrote to Hinsdale (January 12), "has got a very black eye this week. We passed a resolution authorizing the President to appoint a commission of Inquiry but we added a disclaimer, that the resolution in no way committed Congress to annexation. The strength of the vote, 106 to 76 on the amendment, is a pretty fair index of the sentiment of Congress."

More serious still was the blow to Garfield's confidence in Grant caused by the enforced resignation of his friend, J. D. Cox, from the Secretaryship of the Interior. He wrote to him (October 26): "The worst fears of the country are realized in reference to your resignation. It is a clear case of surrender on the part of the President to the political vermin which infest the government." He urged with great emphasis that Cox should publish any correspondence. "I have been personally cognizant of several cabinet resignations . . . and I am sure this is the wisest course. . . . You may express as much personal good will as either truth or diplomacy requires, if only you make it known in unmistakable

terms that you have gone out to make room for a facile man who is ready to fall among thieves as soon as he can find a nest of them to fall into. If Delano wishes to end his honorable public career with unparalleled suddenness let him take your portfolio."

After returning to Washington Garfield was puzzled to find Grant's friends insisting that there was no question of Civil Service Reform, or Indian affairs, but that Cox seemed determined to resign and so chose an issue. Presently another circumstance emerged, of a still more repellent character, when it appeared that the issue on which Cox resigned was his action in connection with a certain extremely dubious land claim, known as the "McGarrahan claim." This had a long history. Reduced to lowest terms it began as a shadowy claim for three leagues of land, made by a disreputable character, one Gomez, in California, on the basis of an alleged Mexican grant of 1844, which was asserted to have been burned later. All Gomez's witnesses were equally untrustworthy, but the fact that the land contained mines led to the claim being fostered and bolstered and kept alive, surviving with unexampled vitality a succession of adverse decisions by United States courts, and similar opinions by attorney-generals that would have crushed any ordinary claim. In the years 1869-1870 it reappeared under McGarrahan's name, backed by a stock company and supported in Congress and outside by the energy of Butler of Massachusetts.

The rupture between Cox and Grant came when the latter, probably under the influence of Butler, said in cabinet that the matter should be left to Congress, but Cox, wishing to kill the swindle, took steps to have a patent to the land which had been made out in the land office but never delivered, marked "cancelled" and to permit the "New Idria Mining Company" to make a valid entry.¹

Presently the backers of the claim began to move, and Garfield wrote to Cox (January 14), "You have probably seen by the papers that the McGarrahan case has been reopened in the Judiciary Committee and several of our

¹ *Nation*, November 17, 1870.

friends have told me within a few hours that it is manifestly done to prepare for an attack on you." Garfield went so far as to try to block action by the committee, but failed, and on February 18 the matter came before the House, a majority report being adverse to the claim, but a minority report, by Bingham of Ohio, directing the Secretary of the Interior to record the title of the land claimed by McGarrahan as perfect. In the course of the debate Bingham and Butler savagely criticised Cox for his action on the patent, and Beck of Kentucky charged that his resignation was forced by Grant on this ground. Charges of forgery, swindling, perjury, mutilation of records went flying back and forth, and when Garfield got the floor, February 20, he was thoroughly angry and shocked. In a half hour's speech he savagely attacked the claim, covering its advocates with sarcasm, and defending Cox with all the power at his command. There was no trace of his usual effort at calm persuasion but a steady flame of indignation. He spoke of it later as "rough shoulder-hitting work, lacking all the graces of speech," but it must have been highly effective.

"In the time allotted me," he said near the beginning, "I cannot follow out the series of unparalleled frauds which prevented the courts, for ten years from reaching the demerits of this case," but he succeeded in giving a clear and damning sketch of the claim in its various phases. He quoted from successive court decisions, culminating in the final decision of the United States Supreme Court; he cited the most unqualified language by Attorney-Generals Black, Stanton and Bates in succession, and then turning to recent events, he finished by a glowing eulogy of ex-Secretary Cox, declaring that "in all his public career no part will do more honor to his manhood than his treatment of the McGarrahan swindle. . . . And I say this in full view of the criticisms which the gentleman from Massachusetts [Mr. Butler] and my distinguished colleague from Ohio [Mr. Bingham] have made upon his conduct."¹

At the end the House, in the worst possible temper,

¹ *Cong. Globe*, 41 Cong., 3 sess., pp. 450-454.

actually adopted Bingham's resolution 110 to 92. Garfield wrote to Cox: "I was never more disheartened, never more disgusted with the course of legislation since I have been in Congress than with the vote on the McGarrahan claim. I felt, for a time, as if the bottom had dropped out. . . . I do not think anywhere near a majority of the members intended by their vote any censure on you. Still it is manifest that McGarrahan had a train of followers in the House, many of whom I have no doubt, were corrupt. Nearly all the worst class of carpet-baggers voted with McGarrahan. Bowen, the bigamist, appeared in his seat for the first time that day and voted steadily in McGarrahan's interest. . . . Bingham is greatly disturbed by my speech and is now trying to insist that he did not cast any reflections on you at all . . . but he cannot make the House believe that his resolution and speech were not leveled at you with all the power that he could summon." (February 7.) To Evarts the same day he said: "The quality of those who voted yea on Bingham's resolution is significant of the results of reconstruction. I feel worse about the apparent censure of Cox than anything else in the case. I have talked with many Senators on the subject and they have given the resolution its quietus for the session."

Oddly enough, it was this Congress which had scandalized Garfield by its lust for offices and general low tone that enacted the first Civil Service law. On the very last day of the session, March 3, when the "sundry civil appropriation bill" came back to the House from the Senate with amendments, it was found to have a clause attached, authorizing the President to make rules regulating the conditions for entering the civil service and empowering him to appoint a commission "to conduct such inquiries." Logan promptly denounced this as "the most obnoxious bill of the character that has come before this House," and announced his purpose of voting against it. Garfield, as well as others, replied to him, saying: "I am exceedingly glad that we are able at last to give, for the first time in the history of this Government, a legislative expression in favor of civil service reform. For this reason, if for no other, I would vote to pass the

bill without referring it to a committee of conference."¹ After Armstrong of Pennsylvania, the author of the civil service clause, had closed with a clear and able speech in favor of the reform, the House concurred in the Senate amendments 90 to 20, Logan being unable to secure the yeas and nays. So the session ended with this gleam of satisfaction.

Meanwhile a former trouble returned to plague Garfield, namely, a strong demand, as in 1867, that he should be the candidate for governor in the next state election. For this he had nothing but aversion. On December 1 he said, "I not only do not desire the office but I hope our Republican friends will not think it best to ask me to consider the question." But it seemed for a while as though nothing could stop the current. "I am receiving three or four letters a day on it," wrote Garfield to Austin (January 21). "I am wholly unwilling to accept the nomination and my only difficulty is how to get rid of it without offending a great many men." He was finally driven to pointing out to a friend in Ohio (R. P. Cannon, March 27) that "it would almost ruin me pecuniarily to be a candidate. . . . Governor Hayes lives as economically as any Governor of Ohio ought to live and it has cost him not less than \$6000 a year. At the end of my time, should I be elected, I would be almost broken financially."

By the time Garfield wrote this letter another fair prospect of the preceding autumn was clouding over. The new Congress met, as was then the law, on March 4 and sat until April 20; but instead of appointing his committees Blaine remained unaccountably inactive and on the point of Garfield's succession to Schenck he maintained a complete silence. Garfield explained what had been happening in a letter to Cox (March 25): "I think Blaine is making a mistake in delaying the appointment of his committees. The feeling is almost unanimous. . . . There has been a heavy pressure brought to bear upon him to keep me off the committee so that it may be made up more in the interest of the high tariff men. Among other things the attempt has been

¹ *Cong. Globe*, 41 Cong., 3 sess., p. 1935.

made to impress him with the idea that I am so unpopular with the Ohio delegation that my appointment would be unfortunate. . . . What Blaine will do I cannot tell. The impression is gaining ground that he is tricky." A little later he wrote to Bowles of the *Springfield Republican* (March 31): "Mr. Blaine has not spoken to me on the subject of the committees since you were here. . . . Till within the last year Mr. Greeley has been very friendly to me; now all his friendship is turned to bitterness and solely because I do not agree with his extreme views on the tariff. He has done and is now doing everything in his power to keep me from any place where I shall have anything to do with the tariff." The session ended with no announcement on Blaine's part. Everything had to wait until the opening of Congress in December.

Bowles wrote in the *Springfield Republican* of March 30, 1871, a paragraph which shows how the matter stood in the eyes of that keen observer. "Though General Garfield is unhappily less popular with the House than he is before the country, and is imputed to have less of that especial ability to carry measures through its confusions and over its conflicts than is almost necessary for a man in that place, we see no reason for changing our early opinion that not only is he the the most proper man for it, but the one who will have it. His experience is ample, his temper is admirable, and his intelligence and independence upon the subjects that are the peculiar province of the committee point him out for it above almost every other man on the floor. The House, perhaps, would prefer Mr. Dawes, for they accept him more fully as their leader than any other man."

The one exciting contest, however, in this short session arose over a subject from which Garfield had hitherto held aloof, but which he could not now avoid confronting. In the winter of 1871 the indignation of Republican leaders over the violent methods used by the Southern whites to break down the carpet-bag governments, involving intimidation, whipping and not infrequently the killing of negroes, led to a Congressional investigation and, in this special session, to the introduction of legislation intended to put negroes under

the protection of the federal government in all cases of such outrages. Bills were framed in both Senate and House for that purpose purporting to be based on the Fourteenth Amendment, Section 1, which declared that "no state should deny to any of its citizens the equal protection of the laws," but going in fact so far beyond any precedent in the powers conferred on the federal executive and courts, that men like Garfield were stirred to alarm. Some of the men back of this movement, such as Shellabarger of Ohio, Garfield thoroughly respected, but others, notably Butler, who assumed to lead, he heartily detested.

He first coöperated with others to sidetrack a bill of the most sweeping character by substituting a resolution for an investigating committee. This led to a violent scene in the House, since Butler flew into a passion and indulged in such abusive language as to stir Blaine, the Speaker, to leave the chair and administer a stinging castigation. Garfield took no part in this, but commented on the scene, in a letter of March 17: "I think Butler yesterday suffered the heaviest defeat of his life. If I am not mistaken it will prove more than Fort Fisher to him." "Public affairs," he confided to Hinsdale (March 23), "are hastening from bad to worse very rapidly. We have been in session three weeks and have received not a word from the President and yet the South is crying for protection against murder and outrage. The President, it is said, greatly desires legislation but hesitates to recommend it for fear the session will be prolonged and the high tariff men will be offended by assaults on their pet interests. Some of us have expostulated with him on this view of it and he has agreed to send in a message today. His power is waning very rapidly and many of the best men here think his re-election is impossible. It is feared, however, that his renomination is inevitable. There are many ugly signs of disintegration in our party."

By this time Garfield's respect for Grant's leadership had pretty nearly disappeared. When at the opening of the special session Sumner was deposed by the Senate from the chairmanship of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, to punish him for having attacked Grant in the previous Decem-

ber, Garfield declared it "an act of the most stupendous folly. It will remind the country of Buchanan's removal of Douglas from the Chairmanship of the Committee on Territories in 1858." (T. J. McLain, March 11.)

The President's message, when it finally came, March 23, added no light to the situation and merely brought on a revival of the struggle, for the committee to which his message was referred promptly reported a bill as objectionable to Garfield as the preceding one. Accordingly, on April 4, he delivered a carefully thought-out speech on the constitutional principles involved, endeavoring to recall the House to a rational treatment of the problem.¹ As was his custom, whenever possible, he opened the speech with a strong plea for the preservation and perpetuation of the ideal set up in the Constitution of properly divided powers between state and federal government. After pointing out that either despotic centralization or disorganizing local independence would ruin a nation he continued: "Sir, the great war for the Union has vindicated the centripetal power of the nation, and has exploded, forever I trust, the disorganizing theory of state sovereignty, which slavery attempted to impose upon this country. But we should never forget that there is danger in the opposite direction. The destruction or serious crippling of the principle of local government would be as fatal to liberty as secession would have been fatal to the union."

Standing upon this principle he then examined the powers of the federal government under the last three amendments and after analyzing the history of the first section of the Fourteenth Amendment he drew the conclusion that it merely prevented state action and did not give Congress any powers except to see that states, as such, did not deprive individuals of civil rights. Turning to the proposed bill he said that if it could be so amended that it "shall employ no terms which assert the power of Congress to take jurisdiction of the subject until such denial is made and shall not in any way assume the original jurisdiction of the rights of

¹ *Cong. Globe.*, 42 Cong., 1 sess., Appendix 149; *Works of James A. Garfield*, Vol. I, p. 703.

private persons and of property within the States—with these conditions clearly expressed in the section I shall give it my hearty support.” He assailed the third section still more emphatically in that it seemed to punish citizens of the United States for violating state laws. “In so far as this section punishes persons who under color of any state law shall deny or refuse to others the equal protection of the laws, I give it my cheerful support, but when we provide by Congressional enactment to punish a mere violation of a state law we pass the line of constitutional authority.”

His most severe criticism was, however, reserved for the sections providing for the suspension of the writ of habeas corpus and the proclaiming of martial law. Against this he quoted the language of the decision of the Milligan case, which he himself had argued five years before. “Sir,” he said, “this provision means war or it means nothing; and I ask the House whether we are now ready to take this step?

. . . I have taken a humble part in one war and I hope I shall always be ready to do any duty that the necessities of the country may require of me, but I am not willing to talk war or to declare war in advance of the terrible necessity.

. . . Have we done all in our power to avoid that which this system contemplates?”

Of this speech Garfield wrote to Austin (April 11), “It may not be a popular one but it is in some respects the most important one I have ever made.” The result of his attack he described in a letter to Hall of Ravenna (April 22): “The speech created a good deal of feeling at first, but a conference was held among about twenty of the leading members of the House the evening after my speech was made and it was found that fully half of those present agreed entirely with me. Shellabarger agreed to offer the amendments desired and that brought about unity. I have been thus particular in explaining the course of this legislation to you because I may be charged with undue conservatism.” The bill thus amended passed the House April 6, Garfield voting for it, and after a further struggle with the Senate, which tried to insert, on Sherman’s motion, a clause aiming to render local units, counties or cities pecuniarily respon-

sible for outrages, the bill finally got through. On this last phase of the struggle Garfield expressed himself vigorously in private.

"I have never been more disgusted with Sherman," he wrote to Rhodes (April 21), "than during this short session. He is very conservative for 5 years and then fiercely radical for one. This is his radical year which always comes just before the Senatorial election. No man in the Senate has talked with so much fierceness as Sherman. . . . He worked into the bill in the Senate a section borrowed from a law passed 700 years ago in England, which, if it had prevailed would have broken down our entire system of self-government in the States. I took the responsibility in company with a few other Republicans of defeating it and the bill as finally agreed upon received every Republican vote in the House. You will see an attempt made by his partisan friends in Ohio to show that he is more zealous than the rest of us. His conduct deceives nobody here but it may at home."

When Congress adjourned and Garfield returned to Ohio he realized to the full that he had once more arrived at a turning-point in his Congressional career. Before him stood the possibility of attaining the goal of his ambition, the chairmanship of the Committee on Ways and Means, and there lay in his own mind no doubt of his fitness for the place or of the strong claims he had upon it. For eight sessions he had concentrated his best thought upon financial subjects and it mattered not what his own committee position might be, he had never failed to make himself heard and felt in every considerable debate on taxation or currency or funding. He had fought unremittingly for definite ends—for national credit against inflation or any form of repudiation; for reasonable tariffs and against extravagant protection or insufficient duties. His principles and his aims were before the country in carefully prepared speeches. At the same time he had not shown himself unduly contentious or impracticable. He had learned the unwisdom of riding for victory or defeat every time.

As a thinker, a debater and a parliamentarian he had attained maturity and poise. It had taken time, for Garfield,

unlike such a man as Butler, did not step immediately into the rank of fighting leaders; he lacked the limitless self-confidence and masterful debating habits which that type of men employed to stride at once to the front. On the other hand, he had all the advantage which a courteous, moderate speaker invariably acquires over one of the dominating type on all ordinary occasions and by 1871 he had built up a position as a thoroughly popular and respected leader of the moderates. At the same time he had abandoned his early somewhat spectacular methods of voting against all the rest of his party or even the whole House and had accommodated himself to pretty steady party action. Never extreme, and willing to oppose the radical wing, as he had just shown in his speech on the "Ku Klux Act," he preferred rather to carry on his fights within the party than to satisfy himself by voting with the Democrats. He had become, through seniority, one of the older members of the House, he had held important chairmanships, and Blaine could not fail to recognize his position without ruining his own standing as Speaker charged with selection of committee chairmen. The only problem was whether he dared make him chairman of Ways and Means. On that point not a sign escaped him. Garfield could only wait in dignified silence until the committees should be announced in December.

Meanwhile he positively refused to take other more showy methods of advancement which came successively across his path. The first was the nomination for governor of Ohio, which he managed to turn aside when, at the state convention, the party nominated E. F. Noyes for the place. The next was the proposal that he should contest the Ohio senatorship with Sherman, who was a candidate to succeed himself, but to all letters and suggestions he returned the same answer, that while he had no interest in seeing Sherman chosen again, he would not himself enter the contest. He was particularly displeased with the businesslike way in which Sherman's supporters went over the state endeavoring to pledge all Republican candidates for the legislature to support their man. He wrote Cox (August 18): "It is disgusting to see the way in which the official gang of understrap-

pers are at work setting up the Sherman job. I have no stomach for a fight that has such elements of nastiness in it. I have done nothing and don't expect to do anything in regard to the Senatorial question." To another he said (July 12): "I think it unwise and unpatriotic in the highest degree for an aspirant to the U. S. Senatorship to throw that distracting question into our state campaign. It may lose us three or four doubtful counties and thus give the Senatorship to the Democracy."

Garfield went into the state campaign feeling that his own future was at stake in it, for if he could call forth expressions of liberal tariff feeling, it would strengthen his chances for the Ways and Means chairmanship. So in his campaign speeches he dwelt to some extent on state issues, spoke a good word for a civil service system, but dwelt heavily on the need for a wise revision of the tariff by its friends.¹ The result was discouraging. During the campaign he told Wells (September 8), "I have had very little support among our speakers this campaign," and after it he said (October 11), "I have been left nearly alone here in Ohio in fighting for a reasonable reform in the tariff." The Republican state ticket was again successful and the legislature had a small Republican majority on joint ballot, but he took small satisfaction in the outcome on his own account.

Noyes (Republican)	McCook (Democratic)	Senate	House
238,273	218,105	18-18	57-48

The two possibilities which stood before Garfield were now successively brought to the test. During the summer Garfield's faith in Blaine grew steadily less. He could not regard his methods as honest and aboveboard. In May he wrote to Wells (May 14), "He will bear a good deal of watching." In August he remarked to Cox (August 18): "I wish I had more faith in Blaine. I don't care so much about the Ways and Means as I did last winter, for the reason that under the deepening shadow of the Presidential election . . . it will be exceedingly difficult to carry any wisely framed tariff bill

¹ *Works of James A. Garfield*, Vol. I, p. 732.

next session. . . . Blaine prefers, I suppose, to hold the cards in his hand as long as he can." After the election he said to Atkinson of Boston, who had been urging his appointment upon Blaine (October 13), "I fear he will be influenced by the fact that the liberal Republicans of Ohio made but little demonstration on the stump this fall." For himself, of course, he would not lift a finger, nor utter a syllable. Blaine must make his own decision.

When Congress met, December 4, Blaine finally announced his committees, and Garfield found that Dawes had been moved from the Committee on Appropriations to the place he himself had coveted at the head of the Ways and Means, while he was given Dawes's former place. Once more Garfield had had his ambition denied fulfillment. "The long agony of committee-making is over," he wrote to Hinsdale (December 3). "So far as term of service is concerned Dawes is entitled to the first place and perhaps I ought not to complain that my own is second. Yet one thing tends to dishearten me. I have no doubt that I should have had the Ways and Means but for the fact that I have positive opinions and have frankly and squarely expressed them."

To Hall (December 7) he gave additional particulars which throw light on Blaine's methods: "It was simply a question of courage or want of courage on the part of the speaker. From what I hear I am led to believe that almost to the day of meeting he had two slates, each marked by the same peculiarity. One made Mr. Dawes the chairman, with a committee that overruled the Chairman's opinion. The other made me Chairman with a committee overruling mine. Rather than be at the head of a committee which I could not lead, I greatly prefer to be where I am, although my tastes and studies very strongly lead me in the other direction. So far as actual control of the legislation of the House is concerned my present position is more prominent than the other would have been. . . . You will be glad to know that nothing which has occurred has wounded my self-respect or impaired my standing with the house."

Garfield felt Blaine lowered in his eyes. "The speaker evidently had his eye on steering clear of difficulties," he wrote

(December 9). "That is not plain dealing either with Dawes or with me. I would rather believe something and suffer for it," he added, "than slide along into success without opinions." With these words Garfield bade farewell to the object of his ambition for eight years, the only distant goal he ever consciously set before himself during his whole career. Twice he had thought himself within reach of it and each time the Speaker had preferred another rather than run the risk of incurring criticism in putting a man of his positive economic views in power.

The senatorial possibility still remained, and Garfield found himself under actual pressure to announce his candidacy against Sherman, both from friends in Ohio and from political colleagues in Washington who were unfriendly to the senator. In reply to all Garfield took the same ground that he would not be a candidate unless the legislature was unable to unite on Sherman. He wrote to Austin, his political mentor (December 14): "If our party will unite on Senator Sherman and elect him, and if that is the wish of a clear and decided majority of the legislature, I shall be quite contented to let it go so, although I do not admire the statesmanship or courage of the Senator. But if, as is now asserted, there are a sufficient number of members of the legislature who will not vote for Sherman under any circumstances; and if he cannot be elected, then I think it is no more than right that my friends should consider me in the list of those from whom the choice shall be made."

When the legislature met the matter was brought to him to settle, for a group of seven representatives, led by his long-time personal friend, Conrad, offered to bolt the caucus and declare for him if he would authorize the use of his name. In reply he wrote a letter (January 3) which deserves quotation at some length. "Both my friends and my enemies will bear me witness that I have stood entirely aloof from the contest in all its aspects. I have not done this because I believe in John Sherman's special fitness for the place, though he is a man of fair abilities, much industry and considerable influence, I freely admit; but the fact that he has studied the popular current and floated with the tide and

drifted with the wind of popular opinion is undeniable. Three years ago I keenly felt the need of support when I was resisting, almost alone, the greenback doctrines of Pendleton, which threatened to debase and destroy our public credit and I felt that the Republican Senator from Ohio should have stood firmly against all that miserable business, but he floated with the tide until Pendleton was beaten and then turned square round. I do not say these things to attack Mr. Sherman but only to show that I have had no special reason for desiring his success nor for aiding it by my silence.

"Now you are on the ground and by this time understand the situation. I desire you to act in this matter just as your judgment shall dictate. I shall be perfectly content not to be named at all in connection with the senatorship if you think that is best. I certainly do not desire to be named if by so doing it will distract and divide the party." The next day he telegraphed to the seven, referring them to the letter and leaving the decision to them. In his journal he entered these words (January 4): "I have reason to believe that I could be made senator next Tuesday by asking a few friends to bolt the Republican Caucus but I will not ask it. Thus far in my life I have asked for no office. I may some time do so but will not begin now." Austin and others on the spot advised against any effort to break the Sherman machine, and Garfield was content.

It appears that Garfield practically had the election in his hand if he chose to take it, for shortly before the vote he received offers of Democratic support. He wrote in confidence to Hinsdale (January 11): "The senatorship went as I expected it would. I may say to you however, that the Democrats tendered to me their unanimous vote, and enough Republicans to elect me with the help of the Democrats expressed themselves willing to bolt the caucus nomination. It was, I confess, some temptation. For some reasons a position obtained in that way would have been an independent one. But on the whole, though the Democrats did not demand any conditions I felt I would be considered as placed under obligations and therefore declined."

So ended this chapter of his career with a series of decisions that kept him still in the House of Representatives under obligations to carry on work of a kind to which he was not deeply devoted. Many of his friends regarded this refusal on his part to fight for personal advancement as a mistake, if not an actual weakness. His letters show that as he said "a good many men blame me for not going squarely into the fight." But Garfield felt no less inner satisfaction over this outcome than he had over the failure to secure the chairmanship of Ways and Means. "For the present," he wrote to Hall (January 18), "I am better pleased to be where I am and so far as I can learn the course I have taken in the whole affair has given me strength in the state."

CHAPTER XIV
CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE ON
APPROPRIATIONS
1871-1875

WHEN Garfield became chairman of the Committee on Appropriations he assumed the most important position which he at any time held between that of chief of staff to General Rosecrans and that of President of the United States. Almost more than any other member of the House, more even than the Speaker, he bore the aspect of a public servant responsible for the performance of the vital functions of government, since it was his duty to initiate and carry the annual appropriation bills through the House. His committee was perhaps the most closely associated of any with the different executive departments, for from each of them must come the estimates upon which the appropriation bills were to be framed, and from them also must come the reasons and arguments to justify each separate expenditure. On the attitude and the policy of this committee toward appropriations depended the successful working of the governmental machinery, above all of the Treasury.

Of the veterans who had been prominent before Garfield entered Congress scarcely a handful survived. Dawes was chairman of Ways and Means and Hooper of Banking and Currency, Farnsworth of Illinois was still at the head of the Committee on the Post Office, Bingham at the Judiciary, Banks at Foreign Affairs, but all others were of Garfield's generation. McCrary of Iowa headed the Committee on Elections, Scofield remained at the Navy, but a new man, General John Coburn of Indiana, was head of the Committee on Military Affairs. He was another of Garfield's old Army of the Cumberland acquaintances, being the unfortunate brigade commander whose entire force was cleverly trapped

by Van Dorn in March, 1863, just after Garfield had assumed the functions of chief of staff.

So far as the subject matter of the legislation under Garfield's charge was concerned, the following years are probably the least interesting of any in his Congressional career. It was his business to concern himself with almost innumerable small details, which, under the American system of specific items, went to make up the annual appropriation bills. Nowhere did the policy of the administration appear as a whole, or even as a series of large enterprises, but always in a lengthy category of single items, dealt with one by one, in Committee of the Whole. It is true that there might be sharp differences of opinion in the House regarding particular clauses, and it was certain that individual members or groups of members might attempt to increase appropriations which they favored, or to strike out others to which they entertained objections. At times the House would be held up for hours in debate over such a problem. But it was, after all, a series of small contests, on single points.

Any effort at the governmental study of Garfield's record in the chairmanship would call for the minute analysis of thousands of pages of departmental estimates, committee reports and debates in Committee of the Whole, none of which is germane or necessary in a biography. All that need be done is to follow the course of Garfield's policy as reflected in his journal and letters, so as to indicate the success with which he devoted himself to his new tasks and to set forth his judgments upon himself and his own doings.

For instance, it is worth while to note what he reported concerning the preparation of his first bill, that known as the General Appropriation Bill or the Legislative, Executive and Judicial Appropriation Bill, which provided primarily for the salaries in these departments. He wrote to Rockwell (December 13), "I am up to my eyes in work on the Committee of Appropriations." Then from the journal. "Jan. 9, Begin to get my shoulders under the appropriation bill." "Jan. 10, Meeting of Committee on Appropriations and ten pages progress in Legislative Appropriation Bill."

"Jan. 12. Committee meeting, a dozen pages more of the bill gone over. Secretary Boutwell before the Committee to explain his estimates. . . . Worked on Legislative Bill four hours, besides three hours with the Committee." On January 13 the sole entry for the day was, "Seven hours hard work on Legislative Appropriation bill." "Jan. 15, Meeting of the Committee on Appropriations. The Secretary of the Treasury and Commissioner of Internal Revenue were before us and we studied the problem of future reduction, in the Internal Revenue Establishment." "Jan. 16, Another hard day's work on the Legislative Bill. . . . Called on Secretary Boutwell and discussed some points in the Legislative and Judicial Appropriation bill." "Jan. 17. Finished the preliminary preparations of the Legislative, Judicial and Executive bill, in Committee and this morning and at one o'clock introduced it into the House and had it set for consideration next Tuesday."

So Garfield framed his bill and was ready to carry it through the House. But not content with that, he felt called upon to make his action rest on some principle other than mere appropriation. His journal shows how his mind worked. "Jan. 19 At half past two o'clock I went to the Treasury department and spent an hour or two gathering statistics for a speech on the General Appropriation Bill. Have been at work this evening with an officer of the Treasury on the same subject. I am trying to find, approximately, the laws by which expenditures increase and decrease. Ignorance is my greatest difficulty in this, as in any other thing." "Jan. 20 Have spent the day in preparing the materials for a speech on the introduction of the legislative Appropriation Bill next Tuesday morning. I am trying to discover, if I can, the normal law by which expenditures increase in time of peace, and also the effect of war on expenditures. The subject is full of interest and I feel the need of more knowledge."

On January 23 he prefaced his introduction of the bill with a short speech in which he criticised the Treasury statements as unscientific and as tending to obscure the real status of expenditures, and then, having recast the figures for 1871

to suit his views, he contrasted them with the British figures for the same period, and endeavored to draw conclusions as to the normal apportionment of national revenues. Throughout he dwelt upon expenditures as the real index of effective national government. His comment in the journal was not enthusiastic: "Some parts of my speech were too crude but on the whole it was a fair success."¹ It was an effort to lift a routine act to a plane of scientific government by finding in it an illustration of general laws.²

It was in this speech that Garfield ventured on a prediction, based on historical analogies, that the lowest level of expenditures would not be reached until 1876 and that then and thereafter the normal growth of the country would compel a steady increase in appropriations. He said of this speech in 1880³ with evident satisfaction in his success as prophet: "I made what they call in Parliament a Budget speech, in which I gave out the philosophy of expenditures and appropriations, and forecasted, among other things at what time in our history we could reach a peace level of expenditures after the war. . . . The period I fixed was about the end of 1876. I made this discovery as the result of an induction: that the expenditures of a war could not be reduced so as to strike a peace level until a period twice the length of the war itself. . . . I showed that it was so in England's wars and that it was so in all our wars from the beginning. . . . Our war was substantially five years long, ending financially in 1866. Add ten years and you get to 1876. . . . I showed that the peace expenses would increase, growing with the growth of the country, and the war expenses decrease. . . . The war was so big that its decrease would be more rapid than the peace increase but by and by these two lines would meet and the sloping incline of peace would come. I got a theory and ventured to present it and time showed my theory to be correct."

During the early part of the session Garfield's success in the prompt passing of his bills was highly gratifying. In

¹ *Works of James A. Garfield*, Vol. II, p. 1.

² *Cong. Globe*, 42 Cong., 2 sess., p. 536.

³ *Biographical Notes*.

a week he succeeded in getting the General Appropriation Bill, and three lesser bills, Naval, Indian and Pensions, through Committee of the Whole and two of them through the House. "The House is treating me very kindly," he entered in his journal (January 25), and the next day he added, "This is the most rapid work of the kind I have known since I have been in Congress." On February 1 he wrote: "Proceeded with the Indian Bill. The House was in admirable temper." On February 3 he wrote to Mason of the *Cleveland Leader*: "The House is standing by me very handsomely in the work of the appropriations. I have got through three of the large bills in less than a quarter of the time they usually require." On February 22 he wrote to Hinsdale: "I have never seen so singular a contrast in the spirit of the two houses since I have been in Congress. From the first day until now the Senate has done almost nothing in the way of legislation. Their time has been almost wholly devoted to politics. Really to making and unmaking presidents. On the contrary the House has been getting steadily and rapidly along with the work. . . . I have launched nine of the great appropriation bills and five of them have gone into the Senate, waiting the action of that political caucus."

In reading the *Congressional Globe* one is inclined to give Garfield himself no small credit for the rapid and easy passage of the successive appropriation bills. He invariably adopted a conciliatory manner, professed and exhibited a perfect readiness to explain any items and to justify by precedent the size of an appropriation or, if precedent was lacking, to support it by a letter from a secretary or bureau head, an engineer or some responsible official.

He had to meet, of course, the criticism of members, especially the chairmen of other committees, who felt that his appropriations for their special fields or local interests were too low. He had also to meet opposition criticism. It was especially interesting to see his dealings with that well-known character, "Objector Holman," whom he now for the first time encountered. Holman had constituted himself the "Watch-dog of the Treasury" and demanded to be shown the reasonableness of any appropriation not visibly neces-

sary to government. He almost invariably offered amendments reducing the size of appropriations for scores of items, chiefly those concerning equipment, supplies, number of clerks, and the like. He queried the value of any item for scientific or literary purposes, and doubted the propriety of anything that did not tend to a money return. He particularly objected to any clause containing a payment to any individual or corporation, having acquired from long service as minority member of the Committee on Claims an inmitigable suspicion of such items. If the chairman of the committee himself or any member sought unanimous consent to add such an amendment or, in the last days of the session, sought it to take up and pass a private bill or to introduce one, Holman instantly said, "I object."

Garfield good-naturedly dealt with him as an established institution, explaining the merits of any clause that Holman questioned, and sometimes inducing him to withdraw amendments or objections. When he proved immovable, or when time was lacking, Garfield tried to override him by appealing to the good sense of the House, sometimes poking a little fun at his narrowness. Frequently, to avoid delay, he accepted Holman's suggestions on small points.

Another and a more serious kind of difficulty that Garfield encountered was the tendency of members who opposed or disliked any governmental agency established by law to strike at it by trying to defeat the necessary appropriation. In the session of 1872 this kind of guerrilla fighting took place over the Civil Service appropriation which, after the authorization of a commission the preceding spring, was now included in the General Legislative and Executive Appropriation bill. What made Garfield indignant was that Butler and others, constantly assuming to be Grant's special friends, assailed the Civil Service plan as distasteful to the President, in spite of the fact that in his annual message the latter had said, "The experiment shall have a fair trial." All that Garfield could induce his own committee to give was a trifling \$10,000, and when the Senate raised this to \$50,000 the House committee, still obdurate, voted to recommend nonconcurrence. On April 10 Garfield took the floor

against his own committee to advocate acceptance of the higher figure.

He began by a plain statement of the action of the President and the Civil Service Commission, concluding: "The simple history of the case it seems to me makes it decent, makes it reasonable, makes it necessary that the House should accord with the Senate in granting an appropriation for this purpose. It is due to the President, it is due to ourselves . . . that a fair trial should be made of the attempt at reform." Then he went on in words which, from the point of view of an advocate, were impolitic, since they were certain to be cast up in his face later. "Now I know that it is becoming very fashionable upon this floor to sneer at Civil Service reform. I agree with what many gentlemen say here in criticising some of the many modes proposed for carrying out the reform. I agree that some of the modes suggested are utopian and possibly worthless. I agree that many of the plans for reform would amount to little or nothing; but I affirm as the result of much reflection that the evil complained of is so deep, so wide, so high that some brave Congress must meet it, must grapple with it, must overcome it if we propose to continue as a worthy and noble nation."¹

Such candor might be honest, but it detracted sadly from the effect of his speech, and it furnished ammunition for the violent assailants of the system, notably Butler and Sargent, each of whom quoted his words in subsequent remarks. Before the final vote, April 12, Garfield again took the floor and tried to repair some of the damage his first speech had done. He began by quoting and holding up to derision the extravagant language of certain members in lauding the spoils system and denouncing the reform as "humbuggery," a "politician's trick to embarrass the President," "a mere farce." He particularly ridiculed two men for proposing to "spit upon it." "One gentleman said he would 'spit upon the idea.' Just how that can be done he did not tell us; but I remind gentlemen that this business of spitting upon men and reform is as old as the days of the crucifixion of our Savior. But 'spitting' and reviling have never put down any

¹ *Cong. Globe*, 42 Cong., 2 sess., p. 2350.

worthy thought or reform." He then restated emphatically the position that the House was obligated to support the President, quoting paragraphs from two of his messages. At the end he vigorously denounced the whole doctrine of spoils, saying: "I am proud to stand in the company of men who favor a reform in this direction. In doing this I denounce not men but a system. . . . It is this condition of things which the President of the United States asks all his friends everywhere to help him reform, and which is rudely denounced by those who assume to be his special champions."¹ In spite of his efforts the final vote on a roll call was 115 to 59 against the Senate amendment. When the bill came back again from Conference Committee Garfield had managed to get it raised to \$25,000 and, owing to the fact that the attention of the House became focused on another matter, it slipped through.

Meanwhile the temper of the House had been directly tested by a bill which came up on April 18-19 to exclude all politics from the civil service by prohibiting Congressmen from recommending applicants for office. The discussions took from the start a predominantly political tinge, the Democrats utilizing the occasion to attack the Grant administration and the Republicans retorting. A marked feature was the claim by Butler and others that Grant was really opposed to the new system. Garfield took the bold step of appealing to Grant himself. His journal says, "In company with Aaron F. Perry called on the President and urged him to speak decisively to his special champions in Congress in favor of Civil Service Reform, so that they might not represent him as covertly opposed to the policy he officially advocates."

The next day he entered the debate, just before the final vote, and, as his journal records, "tried to show that the President was wholly in earnest in this matter." The result was a savage altercation with Butler, who fell on him with the utmost license of insult, to which Garfield replied with sturdy persistence and dignity. When he undertook to state what he had learned from Grant the following interchange

¹ *Cong. Globe*, 42 Cong., 2 sess., p. 2396.

took place:¹ "I called on the President last evening and conversed with him upon the matter of civil service reform and I have the liberty to say—"

Mr. Butler: "I call the gentleman to order."

Mr. Garfield: "Make your point of order."

Mr. Butler: "My point of order is that the utterances of the President . . . cannot be brought in here to influence congressional legislation."

Mr. Cox: "Oh, they will not make much impression here. The gentleman need not be alarmed." (Laughter.)

Mr. Butler: "I made the point of order because the gentleman was about to state what the President had said to him."

The Speaker: "The chair cannot rule on what the gentleman was about to say." (Laughter.)

Mr. Garfield: "The rule to which the gentleman refers will not apply here. The gentleman forgets that this is not the criminal court of Middlesex."

Mr. Butler: "No, it is not, for there is some propriety and decorum in a criminal court." (Laughter.)

Mr. Garfield: "I had hoped there would be some here also." (Laughter.)

After thus turning Butler aside Garfield went on to state with carefully guarded words that he felt the President was in earnest in his messages. Butler then renewed his point and the Speaker admitted that it was an indecorum to refer to the President. A little later, after a sneering reference from Butler, Garfield remarked, "I desire to say that the gentleman has never yet been appointed the keeper of my political conscience."

Mr. Butler: "I never knew you had any." (Laughter.)

Mr. Garfield: "The gentleman's status in that respect needs no discussion."

"A point of order was made upon me," Garfield wrote in the journal, "against my repeating any expression of the President's. The point was no doubt correctly made but I think it was no worse to represent him correctly than to misrepresent him as Butler has done."

¹ *Cong. Globe*, 42 Cong., 2 sess., pp. 2583-2585.

"I locked horns with Butler in the House the other day," he wrote to Wells (April 22), "and you probably saw in the reports what a beast he is in debate. I was determined to test the sincerity of the President's special champions in the House on this question and you saw the result." "I tried to do something to impress the House," he wrote to Hinsdale, "with its unworthiness in the treatment this subject has received at its hands. But the bill was whistled down the wind by a vote of 97-79 and thus ends Civil Service Reform for the present so far as Congress is concerned."

Similarly when the diplomatic and consular appropriation was under consideration, members seized the occasion to ventilate their belligerent spirit toward foreign nations. On February 23, for instance, S. S. Cox denounced the British government for its anger over the inclusion of "indirect damages" in the American case for the Geneva arbitrators, which seemed for the moment to threaten disaster to the whole plan. "I should be ashamed," he shouted, "as a patriot to see the American people skulk before this growl of the British lion," and he was followed by Banks, who asked, "Does not the gentleman know that Great Britain does not regard treaties when they stand in the way of her interests?" Next Voorhees rose to deliver a savage invective against Spain, in connection with the Cuban insurrection then smouldering. Garfield, who had never tried to lead in foreign questions, now replied: "This is not the proper moment to increase our complications with foreign nations. Our relations with Spain are already delicate. I fear our relations with Great Britain are also very delicate. It would be an unheard of calamity if these troubles should result in breaking down that treaty [of Washington] which is an honor to human nature and should be the great exemplar in all future time for all nations in settling great difficulties without war. I hope our Government will be very slow in taking any measures in relation to Cuba, in relation to Spain, in relation to Great Britain and in relation to any other nation with whom we are now at peace to deepen the angry feelings which already exist. For these reasons I am sorry that my friend from Indiana [Mr. Voorhees] thought proper on this

occasion to enter upon this question. I should have preferred that the House should follow the wise example that it has already set and attend to the legitimate business of legislation."¹

Another thing that Garfield had to learn was that as chairman of the Appropriations Committee he could not let a desire for consistency prevent him from laying aside his own earlier views when they conflicted with his duty to provide appropriations for existing governmental agencies. On March 12, when the post office appropriation was before the House, he had to explain how, with his record of opposition to ship subsidies, he could support the payments to the Pacific mail steamers. He did it honestly and with no concealment. "I do not doubt," he said,² "that the word subsidy is a hateful one to the American mind. But the subject being properly and legitimately before the committee I was bound to consider it and after a careful study of the facts in the case I have reached the conclusion that it is my duty to support the amendment. In doing so I do not abandon my general sentiment of opposition to granting subsidies by the Government . . . but I believe there are exceptional facts connected with the trade of the Pacific Ocean which we cannot ignore." In a brief speech he advocated the subsidy as a means of preserving American commercial leadership in the far east. With prophetic glance he looked forward to the time when "the great theatre of commercial activity, the third and last in the history of the world's work will be the Pacific Ocean. Other maritime nations are ready to snatch this prize from our hands unless we at once secure it."

Toward the end of the session the progress of the appropriation bills, so rapid at the start, became more and more clogged, chiefly owing to the slowness of the Senate. He wrote to Rhodes (April 23): "I am absolutely working fifteen hours a day and have been for the last three months and I am about as near used up as I ever was in my life. But I am very nearly through with the hardest of it and have got ten of my big appropriation bills through the House, the

¹ *Cong. Globe*, 42 Cong., 2 sess., p. 1183.

² *Ibid.*, p. 1620.

eleventh in the House ready to pass and the twelfth nearly ready to report. So I hope soon to have easy times." The hope was a vain one, for before he had finally got the last bill through, the Sundry Civil Appropriation Bill, the Senate began returning the earlier ones with amendments, and so committee meetings, debates, votes and conference committees went on with little interruption.

His comment on his own management on May 23 shows how he viewed his duties: "In committee added a few remaining items to the Sundry Civil Bill and as soon as the Journal was read in the House, I took the floor. Discussion continued without interruption on the Sundry Civil Bill until quarter past five when the committee rose and reported the bill and, under suspension of the rules it was put on its passage. It was carried by a two-thirds majority. . . . The day has been a hard one and I must have spoken forty times. Managed to keep my temper though there were many annoyances, and I believe I kept control of the House better than ever before." His journal noted no relief from pressure until May 29 when, the Senate having become embroiled over a bill of its own, the House was left with little to do.

The disturbing measure was a new "Ku Klux" bill, reviving some of the objectionable features of that which Garfield had fought so persistently the year before. Passed May 21 by the Senate after prolonged debate, it was brought up in the House May 28. "The Senate," he wrote, "seemed determined to push us into the passage of the Ku Klux bill and threatened us with an extra session in case we do not pass it. Their performance, however, the House checked this morning by a vote of 112 for and 98 against taking the Ku Klux bill from the table and passing it. I voted against the passage with 22 other Republicans. If we suspend the writ of habeas corpus when there is no rebellion or invasion, it asserts the doctrine that Congress may suspend that right at its pleasure, a doctrine subversive of our Government." The plan was, however, only temporarily blocked, for on June 8 the Senate attached the new Enforcement Bill as a rider to the Sundry Civil Appropriations Bill and after an all-night session sent it to the House. The easier times for which Gar-

field had been looking had, for a time, been actually on him. On this same day (June 8) he wrote to Rhodes: "My work has been finished and the House has been laying on its oars for two weeks waiting for the Senate to pass the last three of our appropriation bills. Every additional hour that Congress sits will be due to the negligence of the Senate."

When the Sundry Civil Appropriation Bill returned with its rider, quiet times were at an end, for Garfield found himself plunged into a furious filibustering contest. All day the parliamentary wrangle raged until ten at night, when, he says in his journal, "the Democrats had exhausted all ordinary forms of motions to prevent the consideration of the bill, I offered a motion, which succeeded, to nonconcur with the Senate amendments and asked for a Committee of conference, and then to take a recess until eight o'clock Monday morning." Garfield was now compelled to turn aside from his purely financial field to that of Reconstruction legislation, for as chairman of the Committee on Appropriations it was his business to find some solution to the problem offered by the presence of the rider. Fortunately he had qualified himself by the vigorous part he had taken in the Ku Klux act contest the preceding year.

Garfield gave the fullest statement of his position when, on Monday, June 10, he made his first conference report.¹ "On the merits of the amendment now in debate by itself considered I will not speak. No man on this floor regrets more than I do that the House was brought to a dead-lock on a question of this sort appended to a general appropriation bill. But there is another phase of this subject which rises altogether above that amendment or any amendment that can be brought into this House. . . . It is simply this; shall the majority of the members of this House have the right to consider and act upon a great appropriation bill in the mode provided by the rules?" Having reviewed the proper legitimate ways of action he then turned and explained the action of the conference committee, showing that the Senate insisted on the inclusion of the "enforcement" section and in order to have any report the conferees had

¹ *Cong. Globe*, 42 Cong., 2 sess., pp. 4453-4456.

to agree upon a compromise. He explained the elections provisions recommended, justifying them as constitutional and nonpartisan, and concluded by avowing his intention to demand that the bill be acted upon. "I propose to stand, if need be, until December next until this appropriation bill shall be considered, shall be voted on, voted up or voted down. This must be done or we abandon and surrender the right of parliamentary government in the country."

In spite of this, filibustering was resumed until a motion to recommit the bill was carried 99 to 79. The second conference report added further safeguards to the "federal elections" rider and this was finally adopted 102 to 79. Garfield's journal and letters give some of the inside history of this contest. His journal says, "By studying all the conflicting elements a compromise was affected by which the most objectionable features of the election law were removed." To this end he made sure that Kerr of Indiana, the Democratic floor leader, was with him on the report. "If you will look at the *Globe*," he wrote to Whitelaw Reid, "you will see that I do not at all approve of the Senate's adding that amendment nor did I permit the amendment to appear in the report until its fangs had been drawn. Indeed as the report was finally made, the restrictions and limitations placed upon the amendment were made on the suggestion of Mr. Kerr of Indiana and the army proviso he himself worded and gave to me and I got it inserted in the report." Garfield was able to write in his journal (June 10), "Pretty well satisfied with my day's work." This was accepted by both Houses, and Congress at length adjourned.

On the whole, it may be said that Garfield thoroughly justified Blaine's choice in placing him at the head of the Appropriations Committee, little as he relished the position. He had made good in his very first session and had shown that his particular gifts in Congress—patience, thoroughness, conciliation and readiness in debate—were admirably suited to the task he had assumed.

It was a natural result that, in spite of his first disappointment over failing to secure the Ways and Means, Garfield rapidly accommodated himself to the new position. To

Joseph Medill of the *Chicago Tribune* he wrote (December 9): "I would greatly prefer to be on some other committee; my tastes and studies all lead me in another direction. I have a passion for figures when they have a scientific significance; but the mere figures of the ledger are not so interesting." Six months later this feeling had wholly vanished. "I have been getting on better than I could have expected," he wrote to W. Ford (May 11), "and am very well satisfied with the position in which I am placed." The fact was, Garfield for the first time in his Congressional career had tasted real power and had discovered that the game of engineering the appropriation bills was one calling for all his skill and intelligence. He had discovered also that the figures of the bills were not "mere figures of the ledger" but had a deeper significance. The game, in short, was worth the candle and worthy of his exhaustive study.

To other questions which came before Congress this session Garfield found himself unable to devote much attention, owing to his unremitting labors on the appropriation bills. The *Congressional Globe*, supplemented by his journal, shows that he was faithfully present at all times, even though rarely participating in debate. He did his best to oppose rash appropriations for public buildings, but was overborne by numbers, and efforts on his part to check hasty and reckless pension bills were equally futile. All he earned was the sneering remark from the member in charge of one bill (January 18), "If the distinguished chairman of the Committee on Appropriations will direct his vigilant eyes to stopping the large leaks in the Treasury instead of attacking bills for the relief of the poor widows of gallant soldiers who died in the service of the country he will entitle himself to more honor."¹

Garfield's hopes for rational tariff action—and they were not high after Dawes's appointment—were ruined by a vote of the House in February, when, without debate and against the opposition of Dawes, Mercur of Pennsylvania carried a motion to suspend the rules and pass a bill repealing the tea and coffee duties 155 to 39. Garfield was thoroughly dis-

¹ *Cong. Globe*, 42 Cong., 2 sess., p. 466.

gusted. "You see how revenue reform was treated yesterday in the House," he wrote to Cox (February 20). "It makes me almost sick to see the folly of those who claim to be reformers. They throw away twenty millions of revenue at a blow without touching an outrage in the system."

When Dawes, from his badly constituted committee, finally reported a tariff measure, Garfield wrote to Cox (May 14): "The most we can hope for is a little starveling bill, inaugurated by the great folly of putting tea and coffee on the free list, and that, too, by the votes of four fifths of the democrats. As matters have turned out, it was far better for me to be where I am than to have been made chairman of Ways and Means." Garfield made a short speech, restating his usual position, "I do not sympathize with either of the extremes that I find deployed here on this question," and recommended striking off the unnecessary so-called "compensating duties" dating from 1864 and cutting down certain tariffs like the salt duty, "which towers up like a mountain beyond all reasonable protection on any man's theory."¹ The debate on the tariff languished and finally became a nuisance, until on May 20, to get it out of the way, Garfield suggested to Dawes to move that the rules be suspended and the bill passed, which was successfully done. The bill did not return from the Senate, but the tariff was reduced through the means of a general 10 per cent cut as a rider to the tax bill. Garfield commented on this cheerfully: "The new tariff is a short step in the right direction. It must be followed by more hereafter when the public sentiment works up to it."

By the time Congress adjourned the political upheaval of the Liberal movement had run its remarkable course. During the whole session Garfield had watched the rise of anti-Grant sentiment with no little sympathy but with scant hopes of any successful outcome. On December 26, 1871, Garfield wrote to Hall: "In regard to the Presidential election many good men are in hopes that something may yet occur to make the choice of some one other than Grant possible. I wish it might. I look forward with positive dread to the work that will be required on the stump next fall, to

¹ *Cong. Globe*, 42 Cong., 2 sess., p. 3218.

defend him from the criticisms which will certainly be made on his course. The worst feature in Washington politics at the present time is that the Administration seems to be run by a few Senators who represent a low level of American politics. Such men as Cameron, Chandler, Morton and Conkling are not likely to confer any permanent honor on anything they touch."

Garfield could not bring himself to see any hope in turning to the opposing party. "When I reflect on the recent hostility of the Democratic party," he wrote (February 28), "and the ugly elements that have had control of it I am led to distrust any genuine reform from that quarter." A month later he wrote to Cox (March 30): "Is there not enough ground for fearing that any new party movement at this time must so largely depend upon the Democracy that we should find the bad elements of that party really in control of any administration which the new movement may put in power? I could not contemplate such a result without alarm. If great principles are to be ignored, merely to secure a triumph, the new party will not be likely hereafter to rise above its source—and furthermore it will appear a movement merely to beat Grant. This is too personal a ground for founding a new party."

Swayed by such feelings Garfield determined to stay with the Republicans, even though the prospect of advocating the reëlection of Grant filled him with dismay. He wrote to Howells (April 10): "If the truth must be spoken there are very few Republicans who personally desire the renomination of General Grant. And yet most of them will support him if they must. Frankly I am of that number."

When the Cincinnati convention astonished the United States by nominating Horace Greeley, Garfield felt a mixture of relief and regret. "Was ever the like known in the history of politics," he wrote to Howells (May 14), "that a Revenue Reform convention, having adopted a noble platform should have ended by nominating Greeley as the candidate. . . . If the nomination was as weak as it is ridiculous it might be laughed at and passed by, but unfortunately it has much strength. If it would result in dissolving both

parties and raising up a fresh organization free from the traditions and involvements of last year, I could rejoice but now everything is thrown into doubt and uncertainty."

Garfield quarreled with no man who chose to support Greeley and admitted freely that in supporting Grant he did so with misgivings. "In favoring Greeley," he wrote to a "Liberal" correspondent (J. B. Burrows, July 29), "I presume that you find some drawbacks. I do in preferring Grant. If Grant is elected we can at least hope that the changes in public affairs will be for the better rather than the worse. If Greeley wins I don't believe he can resist the pressure from rebelism and reactionary copperheadism which I fear will swallow him and all such good men as you and other Republicans who go with the new movement." He summed it all up in one letter when he said, "In my interior view of the case, I would say Grant was not fit to be nominated and Greeley is not fit to be elected."

So far as his own Congressional prospects were concerned Garfield was less involved this year than for a long time. It was a matter of some satisfaction to him that in redistricting the State of Ohio for increased Congressional representation, the legislature modified the nineteenth district by omitting Mahoning County and adding Lake County. This, to Garfield, was an almost unmixed gain, since it freed him from the "iron men" whose hostility had been so annoying in 1870. His nomination was entirely unopposed. Having determined to support the regular nomination, Garfield performed his party duty by opening the campaign with a speech at Warren July 31. Under the circumstances it was little more than a good stump speech, having little to say on large questions, contrasting Grant with Greeley to the latter's disadvantage and assailing the Democrats.

From August 1 to September 11 Garfield gladly escaped from the campaign by undertaking a mission to the Flathead Indians which took him to Montana—a journey that will be described in another place. On his return he found a contest of the most violent personal denunciation raging in newspapers and on the stump, the vilification of Grant and Greeley obscuring almost everything else. With great repug-

nance, but under the compulsion of party duty, he went into the campaign and stumped Ohio until the end. As usual he found his spirits rising with combat, and his letters and journal show a strong desire for the success of the Republican ticket. He wrote to his wife (September 27): "Of course you know that my feelings in regard to the campaign are relative rather than absolute. As between the two candidates and the parties behind them I earnestly desire the success of Gen. Grant and the Republicans. When Grant is elected there are some reforms in our party I shall insist on with more earnestness than ever before." When the Ohio election came off and, with Indiana and Pennsylvania, showed sweeping Republican success, he felt relieved, but added in the diary: "Our party ought not perhaps to succeed now, but the combination against us was so absurd and wicked as to make our party relatively high-toned and noble." Of Greeley's famous stumping tour he said (October 11): "I think Mr. Greeley has been a positive element of weakness in the coalition. . . . His speeches in his own behalf hurt him seriously. I doubt if any Presidential candidate can aid himself by speaking in his own campaign."

Garfield had for his opponent in the Congressional election the same Sutliff who had been proposed for a bolting Republican nomination in 1868, but he drew no large number of "Liberals" to join the Democrats. The vote in the new district was:

	Garfield	Sutliff
Ashtabula	5,430	1,717
Geauga	2,609	639
Lake	2,619	1,021
Portage	3,306	2,592
Trumbull	5,225	2,285
	19,189	8,254

On November 4 Garfield cast his vote for Grant at Hiram and then returned to Washington. After hearing of the overwhelming defeat of Greeley he wrote to Swaim (November

8), "Thank the Lord that the ugly, nasty campaign is ended," but to Mason of the Cleveland *Leader* he said (November 13), "Next to defeat the saddest thing is victory and we have every reason to apprehend all that class of dangers which result from so overwhelming a victory."

In his journal Garfield recorded a call upon Grant after the Ohio election had shown that his success was certain. "Oct. 19. He compared the noise made by the Liberal Republicans to the deceptive noise made by the prairie wolves. He once estimated at 100 the noise made by two of them when he was an officer in Western Texas. . . . I hope he will be able to endure the victory." Later in the year, after Greeley's sudden death, Garfield passed this judgment on the whole episode to Hinsdale: "The astonishing reverses of political life during the past year mark an epoch in our history and tend to sadden one's views of that kind of a career. There is something so touching, so pathetically tragic, in the last days of Mr. Greeley, that it throws a shadow over all the walks and ways of public men. We are in a singular condition here in Congress. . . . The Democrats are stunned, perhaps killed by their late defeat and there seems to be no limit to the power of the dominant party. If to its great strength it shall add, as I fear, arrogance and recklessness, it will break in two before the next administration goes far." He little foresaw what immediately impended.

The session of Congress that began in December, 1872, and lasted until March 3, 1873, was marked by the irruption of sharp quarrels over Reconstruction politics, and by the outbreak of the so-called *Crédit Mobilier* affair, which riveted public attention upon the investigation of the past relations of numerous Congressmen with a corporation that had enjoyed a scandalously profitable construction contract with the Union Pacific Railroad. Since Garfield was most deeply involved in this investigation, it will be left to a subsequent chapter and with it all the political consequences in Ohio. In this place it will be sufficient to carry on Garfield's career as chairman of the Committee on Appropriations to its conclusion.

Under any circumstances the lot of the chairman of this

committee is an unenviable one during this type of session. He has to shove through the great annual appropriation bills, with only four months at his disposal and with all members who have failed to secure what they wished at the first session pushing desperately to carry their projects at the same time. It is bound to be an unremitting fight for the floor, a constant succession of struggles with rival committee chairmen whom it will not do to override too ruthlessly, an unending effort to induce the House to take speedy action when a dozen members would be striving to seize every chance to insert their pet schemes. Now in 1872-1873 the congestion was increased by the fact that the *Crédit Mobilier* excitement broke into the House procedure, occupying hour after hour of the scanty time and threatening at the end to block the passage of the appropriation bills. Garfield never had a harder task.

He no longer found the House "standing by him" as he did in the first session, but intractable, easily stampeded into side issues, not ready to settle down to the drudgery of considering and passing routine bills.

In spite of Garfield's utmost efforts only two of the appropriation bills had become law by the middle of February, three had passed both Houses but with antagonistic amendments which required adjustment, four had passed the House but not the Senate and three had not yet even passed the House. This meant severe congestion, as it was, but to make matters worse the *Crédit Mobilier* report broke in February 18. Garfield had the Sundry Civil Appropriation Bill in charge on that day and whatever emotions were stirred in him by the committee report, nothing in the proceedings indicated them. When the desultory debate following the report died down, he moved to resume consideration of his bill and with unruffled temper and tireless pertinacity he continued to explain items and discuss amendments.

Interrupted the next day by the debate on the resolution of censure growing out of the *Crédit Mobilier* report, he still struggled ahead and finally managed to get this bill passed on February 22. At the very end the Civil Service issue showed its head, when Butler moved a proviso that no money

appropriated should be used to pay the salaries or expenses of officers "engaged in the so-called competitive civil service examinations."¹ Garfield spoke briefly in reply, again revealing some doubts on his part as to the examination system. "I have never assented," he admitted, "to all the plans and methods adopted by the Administration in regard to appointments under the civil service system. A great deal may be said to excite levity as to the mode of examinations and the questions put. But I stand here to say that an administration that has had the courage . . . to seek some method that shall put it on the basis of merit and not on the basis of mere political patronage for party service ought not to be whistled down the wind by speeches designed merely to make ridicule of the methods employed." Butler's amendment was defeated 85 to 103.

The examinations which Garfield found such difficulty in defending are to be found in a series of reports made by the secretaries to Congress.² The commissioners incurred criticism for going beyond the imposition of written tests upon the specific subjects connected with the positions involved and trying to discover the candidate's educational background and his general culture, somewhat as in the British system. This gave them an academic air exceedingly offensive to a Congressman who assumed that any man could fill any office and who demanded "practical" examinations, if any.

It was while Garfield was struggling to push along his measures that an amendment was forced upon the General Appropriation Bill, against his objections, which was destined to attain the utmost notoriety as "the Salary Grab of 1873." While the political and personal consequences of this amendment to Garfield himself may properly be left to be considered together with the nearly simultaneous *Crédit Mobilier* exposure, the history of its passage should be dealt with in connection with Garfield's record on the Committee on Appropriations, for it illustrates better than any other single incident the way he regarded his position.

¹ *Cong. Globe*, 42 Cong., 3 sess., p. 1629.

² House Exec. Doc. No. 146, 42 Cong., 3 sess.

The circumstances were as follows. On February 24 the so-called General Appropriation Bill came back with Senate amendments. The hour was late and, having got the bill into such a position under the rules that it would have the right of way the next day, Garfield moved to adjourn. To his surprise the house refused 98 to 59. Garfield then began to present the Senate amendments, but at this point Butler arose, evidently by a preconcerted plan, and offered an entire bill for a large increase of salaries including those of the existing Congress, now within two weeks of its end, as an amendment. Garfield strongly opposed this as wasteful and as an improper method of legislating on the matter. "Where can you reasonably stop," he asked, "if you begin here with our salaries in the Capitol? What logic can keep you from going on through the entire breadth of the public service? . . . I think there ought to be a general salary bill, covering the whole of our civil service, our naval and military service; and on such a general bill, including members of Congress I would cheerfully vote. I do not desire to get any large or small credit for special virtue in regard to my own salary or that of my fellow-associates. I do not know that anyone does; but when we act on this subject we ought to act comprehensively with the whole field before us, so we can say to the country we are acting on the whole civil service of the country." In spite of this the House in Committee of the Whole followed Butler at one o'clock and adopted the salary amendment 93 to 71.¹

For four days after this the time of the House was consumed by the consideration of a bill reported from the *Crédit Mobilier* investigation committee and it was not until February 28 that Garfield, sorely alarmed for the fate of his appropriation bills, again gained control of the situation. For him the one absorbing consideration was to get his bills passed. That was his duty, and for the chairman of the Committee on Appropriations to fail would brand him as incompetent for his place. The bill was now up for formal voting and when the salary amendment was reached it was defeated 69 to 121, Garfield voting against it. Butler instantly moved

¹ *Cong. Globe*, 42 Cong., 3 sess., p. 1677.

a reconsideration and then an adjournment—clearly to save his measure—which the House voted 113 to 60. The next day a motion to lay this motion to reconsider on the table was beaten 105 to 66, the motion to reconsider was carried 104 to 79 and then the amendment was adopted 100 to 97. A number of men who had hitherto abstained voted against the amendment when they saw it was going through.

In the last three days of the session, while Garfield and his committee members were working desperately to shove through their bills, the final decision was made on the salary question. The Senate, while rejecting some House amendments, accepted the salary increase. The bill then went to a conference committee, Garfield having two strong advocates of the salary bill as colleagues—Butler and Randall. Although his position was almost hopeless Garfield made one last fight against the amendment which he later described in a letter to Austin. "The Speaker [*i.e.*, Blaine]," he explained (March 12), "appointed the conferees on the part of the House, but before doing so he sent for me, and said he could not appoint the conferees wholly from members of my committee of Appropriations, for we were all opposed to the salary amendment, and as the House had voted for the amendment, he must make up a majority of the Conference committee of men who favored the amendment. According to the well-known custom of parliamentary law, the man who had charge of the bill is made chairman of the conference committee on the part of the House. So he appointed me as chairman of the Committee and, with me, Butler, the author of the salary amendment, and Randall, a Democrat of Pennsylvania who was a strong supporter of it. This committee was appointed at about two o'clock A.M. The two committees (Morrill of Maine, Carpenter of Wis. and Bayard of Del. being the committee on the part of the Senate) met and sat until six P.M. and again met Monday morning and sat till near noon, discussing the sixty-five items of difference between the two houses. Remember that it was not the salary clause alone, but all the points of difference in a great bill of seventy printed pages, a bill that must become a law in order to carry on the government, a bill on

which I and the Committee of Appropriations had expended not less than four weeks of hard work and I alone of the House conferees understood all its details.

“In that conference I urged all the considerations I had urged in the House against the salary clause. But the three Senators were unanimous for the increase and my two House associates were with them. I moved to strike out the retroactive feature and all were against me. I then moved to make the retroactive feature apply to one year only of the late Congress and on that I was beaten. I then moved to deduct from the additional \$2500 a year to be paid to members of the 42d Congress, all that they had received as mileage. That motion prevailed, and the total appropriation for members of that Congress was thus reduced by a sum of about \$200,000. In short I did all in my power first to throw out the clause altogether, and second, failing in that to reduce the amount as much as possible. If I had bolted from the conference I should have abandoned the large number of other important items in the bill to the hands of those who knew nothing about it and I felt that as chairman of the Committee on appropriations it was my duty to do the best I could for the whole bill, in view of the situation. I therefore concluded to sign the Conference report, reserving to myself the right to protest against the salary clause in the house.”

On March 3 the final scene was enacted. Garfield presented the conference report and, in spite of his objection to the salary amendment, recommended that the House accept the bill as it stood, rather than risk an extra session. In view of the latter history connected with this bill and the salary clause it is well to note Garfield's words, since they reveal that it was not so much the moral as the financial aspect that he saw. After describing the compromise proposal he added: “I was opposed to the increase in conference as I have been opposed to it in the discussion and in my votes here; but my associate conferees were in favor of the Senate amendment, and I was compelled to choose between signing the report and running the risk of bringing on an extra session of Congress. I have signed the report and I

present it such as it is." When a member asked him "how much plunder" would be taken thereby from the Treasury, he answered, "I am glad the gentleman has asked me that question," and said it would mean one and a quarter millions for the present Congress and an annual increase of three quarters of a million for the next. But he added "it is not 'plunder' unless gentlemen here consider themselves not deserving of the proposed pay."¹

Other members did not fail to point out the questionable appearance of Congressmen voting money into their own pockets, but the report of the conference committee was finally carried by 102 to 96, Garfield voting for it. He then turned to carrying through the remaining bills, and finally succeeded in getting the last one enacted at 1:30 a.m. on March 4. So ended the session, with his duties performed under circumstances more trying and exhausting than he had ever dreamed of during the comparatively peaceful months of the session of 1872.

Looking back on the record made by Garfield in his chairmanship it is impossible to see in it anything other than a creditable one. At first under rather favorable conditions, at the end under the most unfavorable that could be conceived, he had carried his bills, had maintained their integrity against all sorts of attacks and had played his part as the man responsible for providing the means to run the governmental machinery. His patience, pertinacity and persistence had gained their end. But at the moment all these merits were utterly lost sight of, so far as the public and his own constituents were concerned, in the uproar of suspicion, indignation and denunciation which had fallen upon Congress in general and Garfield in particular as the result of the political scandals of the last three months.

Postponing the consideration of the personal contests of this session and of the summer of 1873, it will be fitting to conclude the survey of Garfield's committee service by passing directly to the next session, which opened in December, 1873. Garfield again was appointed chairman of the Committee on

¹ *Cong. Globe*, 42 Cong., 3 sess., pp. 2180-2181.

Appropriations in spite of sundry newspaper objections, owing to the excitement over the salary amendment of the preceding spring. The Forty-third Congress, elected in 1872, was the last in which the Republican party of the *post bellum* years was to exercise full control. Some of the veterans had retired. Farnsworth of Illinois, who had engaged in many a verbal battle with Garfield, was no longer a member. Sargent of California, his peppery colleague, had been elected to the Senate, and no less than four prominent members of the Ohio delegation had ended periods of service—Bingham, Shellabarger, Beatty and Campbell. Of the Democrats Voorhees had been elected to the Senate. The most striking new figure was that of the venerable Alexander H. Stephens of Georgia, who had served from 1843 to 1859, and had then been Vice-President of the Confederate States from 1861 to 1865. He was only sixty-one years of age but his frailness and emaciation gave the impression of extreme age and made his mental activity and facility in speaking the more conspicuous. On the Southern side the young ex-officers of the Southern army—called in the Republican screeds of that day the “Confederate Brigadiers”—were beginning to appear strongly. Such, for instance, in this Congress was R. Q. Mills of Texas, who had fought against Garfield at Chickamauga. Another Southerner of distinction less venerable than Stephens was L. Q. C. Lamar of Mississippi, who had served in Congress before the Rebellion.

Blaine, reëlected Speaker, had to make a few changes in committees. Garfield and Dawes still headed their respective committees on Appropriations and Ways and Means, but Maynard of Tennessee, one of the oldest members in point of service, replaced Hooper at the chairmanship of the Committee on Banking, the latter’s health not permitting him to continue. Butler now headed the Committee on the Judiciary—a tribute to his legal skill, but a guarantee of violently contentious legislative proposals from that quarter. The other chairmanships were continued or reassigned to the rising men of longest service, many of them members who had entered years after Garfield. He had become by the lapse of time one of the oldest Republicans in continuous

service. Only Maynard and Dawes antedated him in entrance to the House.

The session of 1873-1874 began under the shadow of the panic of 1873 and the severe "hard times" which ensued, with an agitation for inflation of the currency rapidly springing up in the agricultural states. What made the situation worse in Garfield's eyes than it had been in 1868, was that Grant's knowledge of things financial was known to be *nil*, and Richardson, his Secretary of the Treasury, far from possessing the stability of Hugh McCulloch, had been sufficiently moved by the demand for "more currency" to "reissue," on no clear legal authority, twenty-six millions of the greenbacks supposed to have been retired and canceled in 1867.

Garfield's management of the appropriation bills during this session may be dealt with rather briefly. His journal shows that he gave much time to them before Congress opened and worked hard during January to reduce all estimates to the lowest point, in view of the probable Treasury deficit. Some of the comments are interesting. "Jan. 22 Committee met at half past ten and heard Secretary Richardson. The Sec. made a poor show of intellectual force in answer to the various questions propounded by the committee." The journal shows that he was not again consulted, recourse being had to minor officials in the Treasury Department. Regarding each bill the journal reports a marked reduction in amount. "Jan. 6 We worked on the naval bill for four hours. . . . Cut down the estimates about three millions." "Jan. 5 Finished the army appropriation bill. . . . The total appropriation is . . . about four millions less than the estimates and three millions less than the bill of last year." And so it went throughout the winter.

All was not plain sailing in the economy program, for even in the Committee on Appropriations members were not anxious to cut down expenditures on public buildings and the like in their own districts. "Jan. 21 I fear the committee are weakening. . . . The pressure from the districts against retrenchment within their own limits is very strong. The pressure for retrenchment everywhere else is very great."

When Garfield introduced a bill to postpone expenditures on thirty-five public buildings where it would do no harm, he found the House utterly intractable, for the bill was referred by a vote of 167 to 76 to the Committee on Public Buildings, which was known to be equivalent to killing it.

What was still more annoying, Garfield was himself harassed by pressure from the principal towns in Ashtabula and Lake counties to prevent the cutting down of appropriations for their harbors. He wrote in much discomfort to Austin (February 4): "The District ought to know of the great and important battle I am fighting in favor of a reduction of expenses and economy in the administration of the government. The three bills I have already introduced from my committee have cut down the expenditures by a total of ten millions, and yet, just at this time, the demand for appropriations for the harbors on Lake Erie makes it difficult for me to do this duty without offending those who are specially interested in our Ashtabula and Lake County harbors. Really it is very difficult to be a national man and still be supported by local influences." In the end Garfield got the Ashtabula appropriation raised from \$15,000 to \$35,000 and the Painesville one kept at \$20,000. "That was the best that can be done under the circumstances," he wrote to Horace Steele of Painesville (May 3). "Almost every other harbor on the lake has had its appropriations cut down heavily." Clearly Garfield, like the other members of his committee, favored retrenchment more outside his district than within it. But for him to have acquiesced in the cutting down of these appropriations at the time when his political life was at stake would have called for an austerity almost beyond parallel.

Garfield got some minor bills through the House during the winter, but it was not until March 5 that he was able to repeat his innovation of a "budget speech" in bringing forward the General Appropriations Bill. The introductory remarks contained much of his philosophy of government. "The bill now pending before the Committee of the Whole," he said, "is the best gauge by which to measure the magnitude and cost of the national government. . . . If its pro-

visions could be thrown upon canvas, they would form an outline map exhibiting the form, the character, and the magnitude of the Government of the United States. This is the proper standpoint from which to study the public expenditures, to examine the relation of expenditures to taxation and of both to the prosperity and well-being of the Nation. What the House may do with this bill will be the test of what they will do with the appropriation bills generally. Their action upon this bill will lay the base line."

He then pointed out that the saying that a government should live within its receipts was a faulty analogy with a private budget; that a government demanded a certain fixed minimum expenditure and if that were not given it would be crippled. He showed by historical examples the necessity of maintaining this by taxation, whether in peace or war time, and no less after a panic than in times of prosperity. In conclusion he set forth the ideal of retrenchment without injury to the functions of government.¹

In this winter Garfield first began a long series of defensive statements regarding the total amount of appropriations made under his chairmanship. Owing to the American system of treasury accounting there were numerous alternative ways of expressing the amounts for any given year, and no matter what the chairman might assert, it was always possible for a party opponent, or even a careless colleague, to claim a larger figure. The first person whom Garfield felt called upon to set right in this respect was none other than Dawes. On February 12 the latter in the course of a speech used figures which led Garfield to fall on him at once. He liked Dawes as a man, but felt it was time to teach him a lesson. "I have long borne with the methods of Mr. Dawes," he wrote to Cox (March 20), "in his treatment of economic questions and it seemed to me justice to truth and to myself that an analysis of the real situation should be made." His comment in the journal runs: "Mr. Dawes . . . has a singular habit of making sensational speeches and saying things injurious to the party. He made a blunder of twenty-nine millions in the amount appropriated for the current year to

¹ *Cong. Record*, 43 Cong., 1 sess., p. 1997.

which I made a response at the close of his speech." Dawes, with perfect good humor, apologized for his error.¹

Garfield's next assailant was less easily handled. On March 10 Beck of Kentucky took the floor to accuse Garfield of being responsible for the clause in the appropriation bill of 1872 under which the scandal of the so-called "Sanborn contracts" had taken place. This was, in brief, an arrangement by which one Sanborn undertook to discover delinquent taxes, on consideration of receiving one-half the amount. It had been made by Richardson and, from the nature of the transaction disclosed, seemed to be a gross case of corruption. Beck also denounced Garfield for extravagance and increased appropriations.

The journal says of this debate: "March 10 Beck made his promised assault which was an unusually weak, rambling and malignant performance. . . . At half past four I got the floor and for about three quarters of an hour handled [him] more severely than I have ever handled an opponent in debate. I am satisfied that he is wicked as well as weak." Garfield's "severity" was almost wholly in method, not language. After quoting Beck's words in full he then deliberately and fully disproved his statements, first, as to the "moiety clause," which he showed to have been inserted by the Senate, and to which he, Garfield, had consented only after appending safeguards which, in the Sanborn case, had been neglected; and, second, as to the size of appropriations, where he proved with merciless thoroughness that Beck had repeatedly asserted the reverse of the truth. But he did not utter a word of personal condemnation.²

When Garfield finally got the reluctant House to consider the appropriation bills he found it hard and exhausting work. "I have never known the House in so disagreeable a temper," he recorded. "All the small men jump upon all the small items and go into a spasm of small economy." The long grind went on throughout April and May and into June. Garfield's journal was filled with complaints of exhaustion and lassitude. He began to fear that his health might

¹ *Cong. Record*, 43 Cong., 1 sess., p. 1459.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 2124-2128.

give away. But he stuck to his work, and on June 23, having practically completed the list, he took the floor to sum up, showing that in nine of the twelve bills there had been a reduction of nearly twenty-seven millions, and in only one, the Consular and Diplomatic Appropriation, any large increase, that being due to the necessity of paying awards under the claims convention of the Treaty of Washington. He estimated that the net saving was at least twenty-five millions. When he had finished, Dawes, speaking for the Committee on Ways and Means said, "I wish to bear witness to the fidelity of the Committee on Appropriations and to say that they may well congratulate themselves upon the result of their labors."

In connection with these appropriations Garfield as usual found himself compelled to debate the objects for which they were asked, thereby entering a variety of fields. At the very opening of Congress, for instance, in December, he had to bring in a bill to provide for emergency expenditures in the Navy Department during the flare-up with Spain over the *Virginius* affair, when a filibustering steamer, full of arms and men, was seized by the Spanish on its way to aid the Cuban insurgents and over fifty of its passengers and crew were executed, including eight American citizens. Although the Spanish government had taken conciliatory steps before Congress met, the fire eaters in that body were not appeased and demanded war at once. Garfield wrote to Hinsdale (November 24) while the war fever was active in the New York press: "The impression is rapidly gaining ground that we shall have war with Spain. My instincts are all against it, but yet I see the very great difficulty in which the rash and bloody deed at Santiago involves us. The indications now point to some precipitate action on the assembling of Congress. The same newspapers that have been denouncing what they call our overgrown navy and war departments are now howling for war. There is much in this as in other phases of public affairs to disgust one with public opinion."

On December 12 Garfield, in bringing in the appropriation bill, showed very candidly that the United States navy was hopelessly inferior to that of Spain, but that in view of

the *Virginus* crisis, some show of activity was necessary to impress the Spanish officials in Cuba who were high-handed and belligerent in temper. At the end he said: "I wish to say further . . . that we do not now ask Congress to touch upon the Cuban question. . . . I am glad to find that all the prospects are now for quiet and settled peace in reference to this Cuban trouble. The diplomacy of the Administration appears thus far to have been successful and all good men everywhere will rejoice that with the comparatively small outlay that has been made we have perhaps aided in making peace certain." There was some blustering by Cox on the pusillanimity of the House and some general debate on the state of the navy, but Garfield got the bill through in safety.¹ By this time the real nature of the *Virginus* was beginning to be discovered. Garfield on that same day wrote in his diary: "I am strongly impressed with the opinion that the *Virginus* carried a counterfeit flag and fraudulent papers; that she was no doubt wholly owned and controlled by the Cuban insurgents. If this be true we must acknowledge it to Spain in the face of the world." On his part Secretary Fish recognized the nature of the case and quickly brought about a termination of the whole episode.

At the end of the session Garfield ventured to challenge the Printers' Union and was beaten. The journal reported the affair at some length. On June 8 "Committee met at ten o'clock and heard a delegation of printers from the Government Printing Office who protested against any reduction of their pay. Our questions drew out from them the facts concerning the tyrannical spirit of that organization which restricts the number of apprentices that may learn the trade and then arrogates to each chapter of the organization the right to fix the rates in its own city. This puts employers absolutely at their mercy." The committee declined to let the United States Government be dictated to and introduced clauses in the Sundry Civil Appropriations Bill to the effect that the wages paid printers and binders should not be above the average paid for similar work in the large cities. When

¹ *Cong. Record*, 43 Cong., 1 sess., p. 179.

the matter came before the House, however, the Printers were successful over the committee, 78 to 75.

The next day Garfield commented in his journal on his problems of leadership. "There is something peculiar," he reflected, "in the temper of the House. A clear strong statement of a case if made too soon or too late fails. If well made at the right time it is effective. It is a nice point to study the right time. I sometimes strike it and sometimes fail. I failed yesterday in striking it on the Printing House question. I hit it today on several amendments to the bill, especially on Coburn's amendment to appropriate \$10,000 for testing Mr. Lee's gun. I said let us have fair play and treat all inventors alike. Congress should not advertise one man to the exclusion of others. I could see the consent of the House as I spoke."

He was unable, however, to induce the House to vote the necessary appropriations for the Civil Service Commission on June 13, in spite of a strong speech in its behalf. "The simple question before the House," he said, "is not whether the civil service examination that has been devised is a wise and just thing and the best that can be done. It is whether we will try any longer to do anything to better our civil service. I hope gentlemen will make that issue squarely and fairly and meet it. The plain proposition now is that we, like swine, shall return to our wallowing in the mire; that all the past we have resolved against in conventions and written against in our political pamphlets shall now be hugged and embraced as the true political doctrine of the American future. Now I do not believe," he admitted, with his customary candor, "in most of the things that have been done in this matter of civil-service examinations. Much of it is trifling. It is too schoolmasterly. . . . But let us try, try on. With this view I implore gentlemen on this floor not to throw us back into the abuses of the past." The appropriation was defeated 108 to 48 in the committee.¹

At the opening of the session this Congress felt itself under obligation to repeal the "salary grab." On December 9 Garfield wrote to Hinsdale: "I have kept out of the un-

¹ *Cong. Record*, 43 Cong., 1 sess., p. 4918.

seemly scramble in the House today to introduce bills to repeal the salary clause. Not less than twenty-five were introduced in a row. . . . I attempted to bring the House to a vote . . . and thus save a waste of time and of good feeling. But there were so many virtuous men who desired to exhibit themselves that the wash of debate was poured in upon us." Garfield had no intention of speaking at all but was forced to do so on December 11. He described the occasion in his journal.

"Alexander H. Stephens of Georgia, reduced almost to a skeleton, lifted to his feet by friends and supporting himself on crutches and wearing a black cap and gloves made a remarkable speech on the subject of salaries. I have never seen so much intellectual power exhibited from so fragile and feeble a form. During his speech which made a great impression on the House the Speaker sent to me suggesting a reply. I did so with some effect I think but not satisfactory to myself."

Stephens had opposed the repeal on the ground that the increase was just and the popular clamor should be disregarded. Garfield, in his reply, took the ground that when the public voice was so unmistakable "it would be indelicate and indecent in us on such a question to resist that public opinion." But his principal point was the same one he had made the year before when opposing the salary raise, that if it was too great a financial burden then, it was more so now. "Mr. Speaker," he said, "at a time like this, a time of great financial distress . . . it is fitting that we begin by what some gentlemen think a sacrifice. . . . If we refuse, we shall be crippled in the most important work of the session."¹ He assisted in getting a bill passed through the House, even though it was not just what he wanted, in order, as he explained to Austin, "to send something to the Senate before the Holidays." Finally, on January 14, he wrote to him: "At last the agony is over and we have completed the work of repealing all the salaries except those of the President and the Judges of the Supreme Court which the constitution forbids us to touch. I demanded the Ayes and Noes

¹ *Cong. Record*, 43 Cong., 1 sess., p. 155.

last evening on the vote concurring in the Senate amendment to our bill and thus put members on the record."

Outside his committee matters Garfield found that his two years' experience had made an alteration in his point of view. "May 26. In the House the Committee of Ways and Means took the day. I am surprised to find what a change two years of occupation has wrought in the topics which interest me. Three years ago I was alive to all questions of taxation and cared but little for appropriations. Now I hear a tariff bill discussed with but little interest but am wide awake to any question of appropriation." He did not take the trouble to speak on what had once been his principal preoccupation.

But this absorption in appropriations did not in the least prevent him from playing his part in the new contest over inflation which broke out in the session. In the Senate a bill was taken up providing for the sanctioning of the so-called "reissue" of twenty-six millions and adding some eighteen more. The amounts were not large but the principle involved, that of issuing inconvertible paper in time of peace to satisfy a popular demand for "more money," was, to Garfield, appalling. He wrote in his journal: "March 1 Went to the Senate and listened with dismay and horror to the debate there progressing. That body has at last been swept away by the doctrines of inflation." The same day he wrote to Hinsdale: "Morton has embarked on the wild sea of inflation and is driving his measures through the Senate as it seems to me to the utter destruction of our finances. . . . I am greatly depressed by the situation."

A few days later the House displayed a similar temper when a bill to fix the amount of legal tender notes at \$400,000,000—*i.e.*, to increase it by \$44,000,000 over the figure of 1868—was passed without debate by 168 to 77. Garfield wrote in his journal, "Inflation has triumphed and the House by this backward step has lost nearly all we gained in the direction of specie payments in the last seven years." He wrote to Hinsdale (March 26): "I had but one associate in the Ohio delegation to vote with me for holding it at 356 millions. We might as well address the patients in the Luna-

tic asylum on finance as to hope to change the tone of the House at present. There was not a word of debate. The only wonder is that they did not run the volume still higher."

The Senate on April 6 passed its bill and sent it to the House. Garfield wrote on this to Austin (April 8): "The Senate by five majority has passed a bill which cuts the cable and spreads the sails and the House I have no doubt will concur. We have no reliance now but the President and I fear the pressure on him will be so great that he will not venture to veto it. Whatever may be the hazard to myself I will protest against it." Garfield was trying all this time to get the floor, but was blocked repeatedly. "My soul is sick and indignant at the course of events," he wrote to Hinsdale (April 8). "I look upon the situation as more threatening and the step about to be taken by Congress as more disastrous than anything that has occurred since the secession of the South. I shall manage to get in the most vigorous protest I can command before the final consummation of the iniquity."

The next day, April 9, Garfield got the floor and made a carefully prepared fifteen-minute speech. In his opening words he struck a note of deep gravity. "Mr. Speaker, the hour for argument has passed. Four months of debate in the Senate and nearly three weeks of debate in the House have demonstrated that this Congress has determined to reverse the policy of its predecessors, and to enter upon a path, new to our recent history, but well known as an old path of disaster and disgrace. I should be untrue to myself, untrue to my deepest convictions, did I not take the occasion to warn the House and the country against what I firmly believe to be the most dangerous and fatal legislation that I have known during my service in the House." He then rehearsed the history of the efforts to sustain the national credit since the war and the contest with the repudiation movement of 1868. As a rebuttal of the claim that there was insufficient money in circulation he pointed to the fact that of the fifty-four million additional banknotes authorized in his banking bill of 1870, over four millions had not yet been called for. And finally, after referring to the inevitable ruin

caused by depreciated currency, he closed by quoting the adverse opinions of Franklin, Richard Henry Lee, Washington, Adams, Hamilton, Jefferson and others, ending with Chase.¹ "I have probably never made more impression by any speech I have ever delivered in the House," he wrote Hinsdale. "Still I knew it was useless."

A final effort to secure harmony was made on April 13. The journal records: "Went to Speaker Blaine's where there were thirty leading members of Congress called by the Speaker to devise some method of harmonizing opinions in reference to the currency in order to get some bill through. All shades of opinions were represented, from Butler to Hoar. I was called upon, among others, to express my opinion and stated that I believed the Senate Bill could pass the House though I would not vote for it; and if passed would close the currency struggle for the session and perhaps for this Congress. I also stated that I would vote for Free Banking if coupled with a corresponding withdrawal of greenbacks." No agreement could be reached and the inflation bills were passed the next day. The Senate bill went through 140 to 102, Garfield again standing almost alone among the Ohio valley members in the negative.

Then came the sudden sunshine, for on April 22 President Grant vetoed the Inflation Bill. Garfield had called on the President late in March (29), when he recorded in his journal: "Had a long conversation with him in relation to the currency. . . . The result of the conversation gives me some hope that he will veto the Inflation Bill. It will be difficult to do so in face of the extra issue of Treasury notes." When Garfield's hope was fulfilled he wrote to Hinsdale (April 23): "Who will deny that Grant is one of the luckiest men that ever sat in the Presidential chair. For twenty years no President has had an opportunity to do the country so much service by a veto message as Grant has and he has met the issue manfully. . . . I feel like forgiving him for a multitude of blunders in view of this veto." The same day Garfield's journal records: "Immediately after the meeting of the

¹ *Works of James A. Garfield*, Vol. II, p. 175; *Cong. Record*, 43 Cong., 1 sess., p. 2972.

House I went to the Executive mansion and called on the President to thank him for his noble veto message. I had a long and pleasant talk in regard to it. He said he supposed a few of his friends who had committed themselves very strongly to the Currency Bill would be permanently embittered by his veto, yet he could not help it. He had tried hard to find grounds for signing it and at one time he thought he could. But the more he studied it, the more he became convinced of the dangerous character of the bill."

Later in the session, after a prolonged contest in conference committee, the House bill, modified to fix the legal maximum of greenbacks at 382 millions—thereby ratifying Richardson's "reissue" but preventing any other such action in future—was accepted by both Houses. Garfield voted with the majority to accept this, 221 to 40, feeling that it was the best way out of the difficulty. On the whole he felt fairly satisfied with the session and with his own part in it. The temper of the country at large, however, was quite the reverse, owing to the financial hard times and the patent failure of negro enfranchisement as a political measure. The result was that in the elections of 1874 there took place a "tidal wave," whose effect was to reduce the Republicans to a small minority in the next House. While Garfield's personal part in this campaign will be dealt with in the following chapter, his comment on the general outcome in a letter (November 6) to his Democratic neighbor, H. B. Payne, may well be given. "The old farmer in my district was not far out of the way when he said: 'The people have got tired of lying on one side so long. I guess that they are going to roll over.'"

It was with the consciousness that it was to be his last session as chairman of the Committee on Appropriations that Garfield returned to Washington in December, 1874, but this consciousness of the approaching end of his duties did not in the slightest degree impair the energy which he devoted to them, nor his earnestness in behalf of what he felt to be good legislation. This proved to be in many ways one of his best sessions.

By working with some committee colleagues during No-

vember he succeeded in getting several of the annual bills framed before the opening of Congress and actually introduced five of them on the opening day. This, he observed to Hinsdale (December 8), "is, I believe more than has ever been done in the history of the Government." A novel danger he had to encounter was that Grant, in response to vigorous newspaper pressure, was strongly moved to recommend increased appropriations in order to stimulate a return to prosperity. Garfield wrote to a correspondent (December 5): "By whomsoever supported I shall oppose it with all my force. . . . It is not part of the functions of the national government to find employment for people—and if we were to appropriate a hundred millions for this purpose, we should be taxing forty millions of people to keep a few thousand employed." Fortunately he was able to write in the journal: "Dec. 4 Bristow tells me that the President had in his message this morning a recommendation for large expenditures on public works with a view to employing laborers. He succeeded in getting a portion of it out. This would be a fatal policy."

This snag removed, Garfield pushed his appropriation bills with such energy that he actually succeeded in getting the General Appropriation Bill and the Naval Bill through the House before the Christmas recess, which he considered to be the first time such a feat had been accomplished in the history of Congress. But such a pace could not be maintained, and in January and February Garfield found his committee work brought to a standstill for weeks at a stretch, or limited to such brief periods as he could snatch between the irruption of violently partisan measures. To anticipate, it may be said that he stuck to his task with his usual tenacity, and managed to get the final bill enacted by the morning of March 4. At the very end he was still fighting Butler, who first scored a success by carrying, over Garfield's objections, a clause indirectly connected with the McGarrahan claim, and then was beaten on a further effort to include an appropriation of \$50,000 to procure evidence to defeat certain claims against the United States; "Butler's \$50,000 job," Garfield called it. When Garfield blocked it "This made the

General [Butler] very angry," recorded the journal, "and he fought and filibustered against the bill but after a series of sharp contests he was beaten and the bill passed," at 3:45 a.m. In this characteristic manner Garfield concluded his career as chairman of the Committee on Appropriations.

The matters which blocked the rapid progress of the appropriation bills were chiefly connected with an upheaval of carpet-bag questions. But first there came the response of the Republicans to the situation created by their loss of control in the House in the next Congress, in the passing of a bill to provide for the resumption of specie payment on January 1, 1879. It was the same Congress which a year earlier had passed the inflation bill, and in this session the same men who had carried that had already given what was to Garfield a lamentable exhibition of themselves in connection with a scheme known as the "convertible bond bill." Garfield would not have noticed their financial vagaries had not his patriotic pride as an American been touched. "It was mortifying to me to notice," he wrote in his journal (December 9), "that while Kelley and Butler were making their astonishing speeches yesterday they were listened to by the Right Honorable Mr. Forster, Member of the British ministry. I felt a sort of national shame at the exhibit they were making of themselves." So he rose and made a brief but emphatic reply, utterly denouncing their demand for inflation of the currency as something which, if applied, would only make ruin deeper. "For the last ten years I have given as much of my time," he said, "(with whatever ability I could command) to the study of this question as to any other before the American people; and I believe it clearly demonstrable that were we to enter upon the path pointed out in this bill and advocated by the two gentlemen [Mr. Kelley and Mr. Butler] who have just addressed the House, that path would lead us by a rapid grade downward to the most measureless disaster that has ever befallen the business and the prosperity of the American people."¹

From such a House nothing very thoroughgoing could be expected, so Garfield voted for the Specie Resumption

¹ *Cong. Record*, 43 Cong., 2 sess., p. 25.

Bill which came down from the Senate, as the best that could be hoped for. He supported it, he wrote to Hinsdale (January 11): "First, for what is not in it, by that I mean that hitherto this Congress has been unwilling to pass any measure that did not have inflation in it. It is indeed much to get them to leave out that pernicious principle. Second Because it does affirmatively declare that the government shall resume specie payments four years hence. This declaration is a great deal. Now I freely admit that the bill contains very little in the way of providing means to bring that result about. . . . At any rate the government is pledged specifically by this act. My criticism on the newspaper opposition to this bill is that they attack it because it is not perfect, and because it is to some extent the fruit of party necessity. Both these conditions are bound to enter into almost all our legislation. . . . I am satisfied from the situation of affairs that we can gain no more."

The winter of 1874-1875 found the remaining carpet-bag governments in the South cracking under the pressure of Democratic assaults, political and physical. By this time the "Radical" or negro-Republican control had been definitely ejected from all but five of the reconstructed states—South Carolina, Florida, Mississippi, Louisiana and Arkansas. In the last two the situations were so tangled as to lead Congress to take up their cases. The problem in Arkansas was which of two rival state governments was legitimate—leading to the so-called "Buck-shot war"—and a committee under Poland was appointed to investigate the situation. In Louisiana the matter assumed a different form, for in the struggle to retain control over the legislature, the carpet-bag government employed United States troops, furnished by General Sheridan, to eject certain Democratic members from the hall.

This use of military force shocked Garfield beyond measure. On January 7 he wrote in his journal: "This is the darkest day for the Republican party and its hopes I have ever seen since the war. The morning papers published a dispatch from the Secretary of War to Sheridan saying that all the cabinet approved his course. If this be so I must

break from them and denounce the conduct of the administration. . . . The Vice President told me today that Grant was more unpopular than Andrew Johnson was in his darkest days, that he is struggling for a third term, in short that he is the millstone around the neck of our party that would sink it. . . . I rode home from the House with Blaine and found him not so extreme but in nearly the same opinion of our prospects. That such a party should meet such a fate is lamentable. But far worse is the aspect of the cause for which the war was fought. The most extreme passions abound in the two parties and I cannot foresee the end."

Garfield's letters to his friends revealed his distress still more sharply. "What ought Congress to do?" he queried of General McDowell (January 8). "It really seems as though we were to be compelled to choose between a reckless and graceless set of scamps (*i.e.*, Kellogg and his set) on the one hand and the armed negro-hating band of murderers on the other. The topic as it is now handled here boils over with party passion. . . . Many of our best men are almost paralyzed by the difficulties which confront us." To Austin he wrote (January 9): "The rebels and the Democrats in the South have been behaving in the worst possible manner. Thousands of negroes have been murdered and no adequate punishment has been meted out to the murderers. Yet in the midst of this exciting, perilous situation, Sheridan has acted so impudently and as it seems to me so much without the warrant of law as to turn the tide of public indignation against him and the Administration. . . . To march a file of soldiers into the Representative Hall of a State and interfere with the organization of that body will not be tolerated by the American people. We shall be compelled I think to condemn this course in the most positive manner. But when we have done it, it does not settle the Southern question."

On that same day a party caucus met in which Garfield exerted himself to block rash action. "I moved that the party follow me Monday into committee on appropriation bills, so as to prevent taking up the Louisiana question on that day, and await the message of the President. . . . I said that we ought to have the best possible grounds before re-

solving to support military interference with a state legislature. Resolution passed and committee appointed." Grant's message of January 13 proved to be somewhat reassuring, and the matter was then taken in hand by a select committee of the House, which ultimately carried through the "Wheeler adjustment" by informal unofficial mediation in such a way as to undo the wrong committed by the military interference and leave the lower House in Louisiana in Democratic control. In the course of their investigation two subcommittees separately visited New Orleans, each of which condemned the action of the carpet-baggers in trying to retain control of the House, but the second one, headed by G. F. Hoar, laid great stress upon the intimidation and killing of negroes by the "Conservatives," organized in a "White League."

Garfield recognized a division of sentiment in the whole North as well as in his own mind. He wrote to Converse (January 21): "I have for some time had the impression that there is a general apathy among the people concerning the war and the negro. The public seems to have tired of the subject and all appeals to do justice to the negro seem to be set down to the credit of partisan prejudice. Perhaps the affairs in Louisiana will raise the right feeling on this question." The feeling of Congress was soon tested, for on January 27 a bill for guaranteeing equal civil rights to negroes came up and was met by the Democrats with determined filibustering. The journal describes it: "We sat up all night in the dreary business of motions to adjourn, motions to fix the day for adjournment and motions for amending the latter. The only sleep I got during the night was an hour and a half nap which I got lying on Scofield's committee room table."

The Republican leaders, thus foiled, determined to prepare a new rule to prevent filibustering and here Garfield had to exert himself to prevent an excessively drastic one of Butler's from being adopted. "I am determined," he wrote, "to resist any such revolutionary change in the rules as we will not ourselves approve of when we are in the minority." His words in introducing his proposed rule (February 2) are worth noting. The minority, in this case, had prevented

even the consideration of the bill. This he said was an abuse. "Instead of using the rules to protect their rights of debate, they have used them to take away the rights of the House itself. . . . Let me remark in passing," he added, with his usual fairness, "that I do not at all find fault with the minority when they filibuster against an attempt to force them to vote without debate."¹ It took several days' debate and some keen manoeuvring, but with the help of Kasson, who moved amendments that facilitated matters, Garfield had his way (February 2), "Butler fighting against it and feeling very angry that he had been defeated in his purposes."

By the aid of the new rules the Civil Rights Bill was then forced through, February 4, Garfield making a speech which was a plea for justice to the negroes. "Their fate politically must be ours. Justice to them has always been safety for us. Let us not shrink now."² Garfield's comment on these episodes showed the revival of old-time feelings in him. "In the last few days," he wrote Hinsdale (February 9), "we have had a return of plantation manners in the House and probably a foretaste of what the Democrats will do when they come into power."

The next step of the radical anti-Southerners, the Grant men, was to try to force through a new law to perpetuate executive control over federal elections, in which the extreme features of the Ku Klux bill of 1871 again made their appearance. This at once forced Garfield over to the moderate side. Greatly as he was stirred by the reports of "Southern outrages" he did not lose his head. "Our party held a caucus last night," he wrote Hinsdale (February 13), "which lasted until nearly midnight in which those of us who believed in a government of law and not of the bayonet were compelled to take grounds against our associates. The majority of the caucus voted to suspend the writ of habeas corpus throughout the United States, to enable the President to put down disorder in the South. I took ground against it in a short speech and was bitterly assaulted by a whole drove of cheap

¹ *Cong. Record*, 43 Cong., 2 sess., p. 892.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 1004-1005.

men. But Hale, Blaine, and Pierce of Mass. stood by me and we gave the extremists notice that they could not run that sort of politics without our opposition." Nevertheless, the bill was forced to a vote over violent Democratic opposition at the end of February, endangering Garfield's appropriation bills. "I was greatly opposed," he remarked in the journal, "to the unnecessary folly into which we were plunged by the rashness of a few members." Garfield, with about twenty other Republicans, voted against the bill February 27, but could not prevent its passage. In the Senate, however, it was easily blocked.

Three days later the House was confronted with the carpet-bag question in the cases of Louisiana and Arkansas. Since the "Wheeler adjustment" was in process of completion in the former, a resolution favoring nonintervention, offered by Hoar of the investigating committee, was easily carried when a vote was finally secured. As to Arkansas, more difficulty was encountered, owing to the fact that Grant had sent a message to Congress, February 8, directly opposing the report on Arkansas presented by Poland the day before, which took the ground that no intervention was necessary. Owing to Grant's attitude the resolution which Poland brought up on March 2, supporting it with an emphatic speech, was a test of the strength of the aggressive faction in the Republican party. The result was that a large number of Republicans joined with the Democrats to pass the resolution 150 to 81. This to Garfield was a significant outcome. He wrote to Hinsdale: "I think perhaps the passage of the [Force] Bill might have been prevented if Blaine, Dawes, myself and others of some standing in the House had taken the floor and made speeches against it. I should have done so but for the pressure of work which made it impossible for me to give the requisite time to the subject. It was well-known, however, that the bill would not pass the Senate and less resistance was made on that account. I think our vote on the Arkansas question was the reaction from the extremes into which the Force Bill placed the party."

The end of this Congress was described in the journal (March 4): "At twelve oclock Blaine made a very handsome

address. His gavel fell and the shadow of power which had been flickering over the 43d congress departed like a ghost and we were citizens again. The Speaker received a great ovation from the galleries and House as he descended from the Chair. I gathered a few choice friends in my Committee Room chatted a few minutes and said good-by. Then I hired a carriage and drove home and went to bed and slept until dinner time."

In looking back over Garfield's four years of service as chairman of the Committee on Appropriations one receives the impression of his steady growth in effectiveness until, in his last sessions, under trying circumstances and with an unmanageable House, he is seen displaying no small powers of leadership and management. In all of it, however, we do not find him snapping the whip or trying to override opposition. Even when compelled by the necessities of his position to insist on the consideration by the House of financial measures as against bills demanded by other chairmen or members, he always tried to do so without asserting his rights in such a way as to create any sense of injustice. When he was unfairly attacked by such men as Beck or Cox, he retorted with a full defense of his action, but on most occasions he tried to manage the business of appropriations without any mention of party matters.

Probably the most prominent feature in Garfield's speeches on appropriations, long or short, was his constant sense of governmental responsibility. As he continually said when defending his action in voting for the Appropriation Bill of 1873, it was his business as chairman of that committee to induce the House to vote the money for carrying on the government of the United States, not to legislate nor to initiate reforms. Examples of this sense of his official position, of the fundamentally governmental, not partisan, character of his duties, have been constantly given; and there can be no doubt that this aspect of his place was wholly to his tastes. One gathers from such speeches as those of March, 1872, and of June, 1874, that he heartily enjoyed the opportunity to carry through a rational program, supported in every part by specific reasons, but resulting in a

broad general governmental policy. There was positive instruction in the exordium to his "Budget speech" of 1872 and still more in that of 1874.

To some minds such general policies are without meaning. Details are the only things that count with scores of Congressmen, and it was upon the details of Garfield's bills rather than upon the principles of policy that he had to meet criticism and fault-finding. But Garfield's love for a sound general policy was supported by a positive genius for details. The methodical, careful work by which he made himself master of the purpose and justification for hundreds upon hundreds of specific appropriations in every branch of the government service resulted in his being very rarely tripped up or confuted when he was in charge of a bill. The moment an assailant had finished his speech, whether it was one denouncing a clause as wickedly extravagant or as shamefully parsimonious, Garfield was on his feet to state, in a perfectly lucid paragraph, precisely why the committee had decided to recommend that amount. When he had finished his statement and left it to the House little argument as a rule was necessary.

Garfield was not primarily a fighting chairman. He was not, he felt, advocating a cause but bringing forward government business for the House to pass, modify or reject. He often argued strongly for some clause, or against some amendment, but his whole position was that of the agent of the House, not its master. This permeated his utterances and even his thoughts. His leadership was one of explanation, exposition, persuasion; not of attack or battle. He made the most vigorous pertinacious efforts under the rules, to induce the House to consider and accept the committee recommendations, but he had no idea of dominating as a master.

Garfield's fellow committeemen could count on his constant support and courteous recognition. He invariably spoke as chairman of the committee and for the committee. When some junior member was given charge of a bill, Garfield, as the votes and other indications show, was almost always present, speaking only when necessary, loyally leav-

ing to his colleague the opportunity to show his powers. It was under him that such men as Hale of Maine gained training. His journal shows him using his influence to moderate his peppery colleagues, such as Aaron Sargent of California. (June 22, 1874.) The Sundry Civil Appropriation Bill was in conference between the Houses. "At half past eight conference committee met, Morrill of Maine, and Sargent and Stevenson of the Senate and Hale and Niblack and myself worked until two o'clock in the morning and settled all points save three when Hale and Sargent flared up and the conference ended for the night. Walked with Sargent and before he reached his residence he concluded to concede to our views and sign the report."

Garfield's judgment on his own record, in this, the last of his sessions as a committee chairman, was given in a letter to Hinsdale, which expresses interestingly the natural dissatisfaction of a man who does necessary but nonpolitical public service at the relative inconspicuousness of his position. "At last the long hard struggle is over," he wrote, "and I lie stranded like a ship ashore, waterlogged and shattered by the battle of wind and waves. You will perhaps think I am always saying the same thing at the end of a session, but I am sure no other five days of my Congressional life have been so crowded with heavy work, as those just ended. Forty-eight hours ago, six of my appropriation bills were in peril; two of them had not passed the House the first time and the others were in the Senate or in conference committees. They were all passed in good shape at 11:30 a.m. yesterday. The amount of intellectual work I have done and the physical strain which has accompanied it is more than anything I have ever done before.

"I don't suppose I shall ever get the credit I deserve for it; for the newspaper men don't seem to regard any work of much account, unless it is of the sensational sort. For example, Judge Poland's one speech, of Tuesday last, on the Arkansas question, is more talked of than all the work I have done this session; yet that speech, both in its merits and its importance to the country were light in comparison with the work I have done in each week of the session. On the

whole I am inclined to the opinion that the popular estimate of intellectual work is in the inverse ratio of its real value. Isn't this your experience? I don't mean to disparage the work of Poland; for I think it was very important to check the career of the President in reference to the Southern question and that we have done pretty effectually." With these reflections Garfield bade farewell to his years of Congressional committee service. He was about to exemplify to a most marked degree, in his own career, the truth of his opinion that the sensational overshadowed the merely serviceable in the public eye. Little did he realize that all the greatest successes of his public life still lay before him.

CHAPTER XV
CRÉDIT MOBILIER, SALARY GRAB AND
DE GOLYER PAVEMENT

1872-1874

IT was while Garfield was devoting his full capacity of leadership and his keenest powers of thought and analysis to performing the honorable but heavy duties laid upon him by the chairmanship of the Committee on Appropriations, that he found himself involved in one of the great historic scandals of the American government, and obliged to carry on a desperate fight for the protection of his own good name and the retention of his place in Congress. So important was this episode in his career that it deserves detailed consideration apart from the study of his Congressional activities during the same years.

The matter made its first appearance in the midst of the campaign of 1872. On returning from his Montana trip, he noted in his journal at Fort Leavenworth: "The political campaign has been waged with unparalleled bitterness and acrimony during the thirty days I have been absent. I find my own name dragged into some story which I do not understand but only see referred to in the newspapers." Two days later he wrote to Colfax, "asking the nature of the slander against him and me and others," but it was not long before he discovered that the matter was a charge circulated by the New York *Sun* that he, along with a number of other members of Congress, had been bribed some years before by Oakes Ames, a representative from Massachusetts who was intimately connected with the *Crédit Mobilier*. This oddly named corporation had taken the contract to build the Union Pacific Railroad and Ames was charged with having distributed blocks of stock with the Speaker and committee chairman in order to safeguard the interests of his associates against any unfavorable legislation or investigation.

When Garfield went to Washington to present his report of the Indian negotiations, he furnished two newspaper men with denials of the charge so far as he was concerned. General Boynton, correspondent of the Cincinnati *Commercial*, sent to his paper an item which was printed September 16. "He authorizes the statement," it ran, "that he never subscribed for a single share of the stock, and that he never received or saw a share of it."

Donn Piatt, editing *The Capitol*, an independent paper at Washington, also a personal friend of Garfield, added further information in an editorial of September 29, 1872. In both these statements Garfield omitted to mention one element in the situation, out of a desire to avoid seeming to cast any possible blame on his associates: he did not state that his refusal to take the *Crédit Mobilier* stock was due to information he had received from Judge Black, who had aroused his suspicions of its entire rectitude. As will be seen, this was a tactical blunder on his part. His opinion of the situation is recorded in his journal: "Sept. 19. The Credit Mobilier story started by the *New York Sun* is one of the vilest and boldest pieces of rascality in the way of wicked journalism I have ever seen. I think this independently of the fact that my own name is so unjustly involved in the lie."

When the last session of the Forty-second Congress opened (December 2) Blaine left the Speaker's chair to move a special committee of investigation on the *Crédit Mobilier* charges, which was immediately accepted by the House. This step was taken with Garfield's approval, the journal showing that he called twice on Blaine (November 28, December 1) and "urged the importance of an investigation into the Credit Mobilier scandal." His comment on Blaine is suggestive. "He is vigorous and intelligent but cares a good deal more for the machinery of politics than I do. He believes the Civil Service Reform a humbug. I should favor the Civil Service Reform if for no other reason than that of getting partially rid of the enormous pressure for office." In this case the men agreed and the motion for the investigation was the immediate outcome.

The committee as appointed had Poland of Vermont for

chairman and the following members, Banks, McCrary, Niblack and Merrick. Into its labors it is not necessary to go in detail, except in so far as Garfield was concerned. It may be said that, beginning December 12, it called before it a succession of witnesses to find out what the *Crédit Mobilier* was doing in 1867-1868, the year when the bribery was supposed to have taken place, and rapidly discovered such startling facts regarding the relations of the corporation to the Union Pacific Railroad that a second committee was authorized on January 6 for the sole purpose of ventilating that aspect of the case. By this time the public became dimly aware that behind a tangle of contracts, subcontracts, stock and bond issues and dividends, a small group of capitalists, as directors of the Union Pacific Railroad, had voted to themselves in their capacity as directors of the *Crédit Mobilier* a construction contract on such terms as to give them enormous profits. In other words, a gigantic swindle seemed to have been unearthed and the whole newspaper press of the United States burst into a frenzy of suspicion and denunciation.

Under these circumstances the supposed distribution of stock among prominent Congressmen assumed a highly sinister aspect, and the more sensational journals, assuming the truth of the *Sun's* charges, unremittingly dragged the names of the accused men in the mud. Among these, of course, was Garfield, to whom the experience came as a staggering shock. He told Hinsdale (December 31): "It has been a new form of trial to see my name flying the rounds of the press in connection with the basest of crimes. It is not enough for one to know that his heart and motives are pure, if he is not sure but that good men here and there who do not know him, will set him down among the list of men of doubtful morality. There is nothing in my relation to the case for which [the] tenderest conscience or the most scrupulous honor can blame me. But it grieves me greatly to have been negotiating with a man who had so little sense of truth and honor as to use his proposals for a purpose in no way apparent to me."

When Ames was first asked by the committee as to his relations with Congressmen, he naturally desired to make

everything appear as innocent as possible and his testimony in December was general and at times sketchy. So far as Garfield was concerned the two men appear to have discussed their dealings at some time between December 11, when Garfield wrote out a statement for later use, and December 17, when Ames testified. Regarding this interview the two men later gave testimony. Garfield said in his *Review*:¹ "Soon after the investigation began Mr. Ames asked me what I remembered of our talk in 1867-68 in reference to the Credit Mobilier company. On the following day, I took my written statement to the Capitol and read it to him carefully, sentence by sentence, and asked him to point out anything which he might think incorrect. He made but two criticisms; one in regard to a date, and the other that he thought it was the Credit Foncier and not the Credit Mobilier that Mr. Train asked me to subscribe to in 1866-67. When I read the paragraph in which I stated that I had once borrowed \$300 of him, he remarked, 'I believe I did let you have some money, but I had forgotten it.' He said nothing to indicate that he regarded me as having purchased the stock; and from that conversation I did not doubt that he regarded my statement as substantially correct."

When Ames was asked about his dealings with Garfield he said, in a prepared statement (December 17): "I agreed to get ten shares of stock for him and hold it until he could pay for it. He never did pay for it or receive it."

"Q. He never paid any money on that stock nor received any money from it? A. Not on account of it.

Q. He received no dividends? A. No sir; I think not. He says he did not. My own recollection is not very clear.

Q. So that, as you understand it, Mr. Garfield never parted with any money nor received any money on that transaction? A. No, sir; he had some money from me once some three or four hundred dollars, and called it a loan. He says that is all he ever received from me and that he considered it a loan. He never took the stock and never paid for it.

¹ J. A. Garfield, *Review of the Transactions of the Crédit Mobilier Company*, cited as *Review*, p. 23.

Q. Did you understand it so? A. Yes, I am willing to so understand it. I do not recollect paying him any dividend, and have forgotten that I paid him any money.”¹ As appears from the foregoing, Ames was trying to adjust his own hazy recollections of dealings five years before to what Garfield had asserted in their interview. He said, almost in so many words, that he was accepting Garfield’s statements on what he did not remember clearly.

Garfield commented on this testimony in a letter to Dr. Robison (January 9): “I have waited with some impatience for the opportunity to appear before the committee and state all that I know in regard to it. . . . In Mr. Ames’ testimony published in the papers a few days since, he stated under oath that I never paid for or received the stock. He stupidly says he agreed to get it for me. His statement would have been exactly according to fact, if he had said he proposed to get it for me. Of course it has been trying to me to keep silent while the newspaper war has gone on, but I think it a manlier course to bide my time.”

His time came on January 14, when he appeared before the committee and gave his version of the transaction of 1868, which he had written out a month before.² Ames, he said, had offered him stock which he could have by paying \$1,000 and interest, and also offered, if Garfield could not pay, to hold the stock until he could pay or until dividends had accrued. Garfield would not agree to the proposal until he knew from the charter the extent to which stockholders were liable. “From the case as presented,” he went on, “I probably should have taken the stock if I had been satisfied in regard to the extent of pecuniary liability.” Hearing later that the company was involved in controversy with the Union Pacific, he told Ames he had concluded not to take the stock. “There the matter rested,” he said, “so far as I was concerned.” He also said: “Mr. Ames never gave nor offered to give any stock as a gift. I once asked and obtained from

¹ *House Reports*, No. 77, 42 Cong., 3 sess., referred to as *Crédit Mobilier Report*, p. 29.

² *Ibid.*, p. 129.

him and afterwards repaid to him, a loan of \$300; that amount is the only valuable thing I ever received from or delivered to him. I never owned, received, or agreed to receive any stock of the Credit Mobilier, nor any dividends or profits." The committee pursued him further, as to the \$300.

"Q. Had this loan you speak of any connection in any way with your conversation in regard to the Credit Mobilier stock? A. No connection except in regard to the time of payment. Mr. Ames stated to me that if I concluded to subscribe for the Credit Mobilier stock I could allow the loan to remain until the payment on that was adjusted. I never regarded it as connected in any other way with the stock enterprise. . . . I had been to Europe the fall before and was in debt and borrowed several sums of money at different times and from different persons. This loan from Mr. Ames was not at his instance. I made the request myself."

Then followed a question which obviously put Garfield on the defensive, asked by his friend, Judge Black, who was present as counsel for one of the parties involved.

"Q. Did you say you refused to take the stock, simply because there was a lawsuit about it? A. No; not exactly that. I do not remember any other reason which I gave to Mr. Ames than that I did not wish to take stock in anything that would involve controversy. I think I gave him no other reason than that." Black then asked other questions to bring out whether any suspicion on Garfield's part as to the origin of the company's profits played a part, but he clearly evaded answering.¹ This action on his part was because of his almost quixotic determination to say nothing that might seem to disparage his colleagues. The fact was, as Judge Black knew when he asked the question, that Garfield had cut loose from the project, because Black himself had warned him of possible corruption in the *Crédit Mobilier*.² To have said that would have placed Garfield himself in an unassailable position, for all he would have had to do would have

¹ *Crédit Mobilier Report*, p. 129.

² See letter of Black in J. A. Garfield, *Review*, p. 14.

been to call upon Black to testify. But this would have been a blow not only at Ames, but at any of his colleagues who had continued to hold the stock, and that Garfield was unwilling to be responsible for, unless compelled. He evidently felt that he could clear himself without telling all he knew and so took the risk. For this he was destined to pay heavily.¹ Further evidence corroborated the testimony of Ames and Garfield. On January 14 it was testified that Garfield's name was not on the books of the *Crédit Mobilier* as a stockholder.² On January 18 Ames's bookkeeper testified that there was nothing about Garfield in his accounts, although there was about sundry other members.

On the same day that Garfield testified an odd episode took place. Somebody not identified, probably a newspaper correspondent, told Garfield that Ames, on leaving the committee room, had been heard to say that "Garfield was in league with Judge Black to break him down and it was not \$300 but \$400 which he had let Garfield have, who had not only never repaid it but had refused to repay it." Swept wholly off his feet by this tale, Garfield did not wait to verify it, but dashed off a furious note to Ames with a check for \$400 and sent it through the mail. Later he found that in his anger he had sent the check but not the note, so he tried to hunt up Ames to explain, but did not succeed until the next morning. Ames denied the story at once, returned the check and wrote the denial on the back of the envelope.³ Garfield was about to leave when Ames "said he had some memoranda which seemed to indicate that the money I had of him was on account of stock; and asked me, if he did not, some time in 1868, deliver to me a statement to that effect. I told him if he had any account of that sort I was neither aware of it nor responsible for it; and thereupon I made substantially the following statement: Mr. Ames, the only memorandum you ever showed me was in 1867-8 when speaking of the proposed sale of stock, you figured out on a little piece of paper what you supposed would be realized

¹ Mrs. J. A. Garfield, 1915.

² *Crédit Mobilier Report*, p. 136.

³ J. A. Garfield, *Review*, p. 24.

from an investment of \$1,000; and as I remember you wrote down these figures: 1000

1000

400

2400

as the amounts you expected to realize. While saying this to Mr. Ames I wrote the figures as above on a piece of paper lying on his table, to show him what was the only statement he had ever made to me." This is a clear case of Garfield's acting impulsively under the strain caused by the public clamor and the sense of danger.

The other Congressmen under investigation showed in most cases an equal certainty with Garfield that they had never owned any *Crédit Mobilier* stock; in fact, the issue seemed to be, not whether any of them had been bribed to vote in any particular way, but whether they had taken stock on easy terms. A few of them owned to having purchased the stock from Ames; others, including Blaine, proved, with Ames's concurrence, that they had had none. The remainder were left in a somewhat undecided position, Garfield on the whole coming nearest to freeing himself, the only possible question being the precise nature of the small sum of money passed between the men five years before, and on that their testimony did not substantially differ. Garfield's view of the situation to this point appears in a letter to Professor Perry (January 21): "My whole relation to the case was doubtless like that of several others, and but for my pecuniary caution I might have taken the stock with no thought of harm. . . . It is a terrible thing to involve true men in the appearance of evil. . . . I am puzzled to know whether Mr. Ames is a scheming, designing man or whether he is stupidly, stolidly ignorant of what belongs to high-toned morality."

The day after Garfield wrote this letter, the country was electrified by a sudden change in the policy of the chief witness, Ames. Threatened by the officers of the *Crédit Mobilier* with a suit to compel his accounting for all the stock he either had or had not conveyed to Congressmen, he appar-

ently determined to make a desperate effort to clear his own skirts by fastening ownership upon as many others as possible. On January 22, accordingly, he again took the stand and under the sympathetic and apparently prearranged questions of the chairman he restated his relations with Congressmen in such a way as to make it appear that they had actually become owners of the stock and had received dividends. In the course of a few hours he had said enough to convict most of the members who had testified of lying, or rather, perjury, if his assertions could be sustained. Incidentally he also convicted himself, since he had to contradict his earlier sworn testimony, but this escaped particular notice in the outburst of execration which roared up from the press at this sudden revelation.

The small sum of money which Ames had given Garfield in 1868, which was to pass for a loan if Garfield decided not to take the stock, now assumed a wholly different character. Ames asserted that Garfield had "paid par and interest" for \$1,000 of stock, but that in reality he paid nothing since Ames "carried it for him" until there was a cash dividend of \$600 which, added to the further sum of \$776, due Garfield as the market value of a bond bonus that accompanied the stock, paid for the 10 shares with interest and left \$329 over. This, said Ames, was the sum that was turned over to Garfield in the summer of 1868. Without paying a cent he had become owner of ten shares. When asked if this was the same sum as the loan mentioned by Garfield, Ames said, "He calls this a loan." When asked if Garfield had ever repaid it he replied, "I have no recollection of it." The members of the committee, bearing in mind his first testimony and Garfield's, pressed him hard on that point.

"Q. You do not call it a loan? A. I did not at the time. I am willing it should go to suit him.

Q. What we want to get at is the exact truth. A. I have told the exact truth in my statement.

Q. When you paid him \$329 did he understand that he borrowed that money from you? A. I do not suppose so.

Q. Have you any belief now that he supposed so? A. No;

only from what he said the other day. I do not dispute anybody." From this ground he did not budge.¹

He also said in response to a question that there had been no conversation about rescinding the purchase or abandoning it. On the other hand, he said repeatedly that Garfield had never had the stock and had never had any other dividend, although the committee, puzzled at this, kept returning to the point. "I did not deliver him any stock before or since," he said. "Why did he not receive his certificate?" he was asked. "I do not know," was Ames's reply. Later:

"Q. There were dividends of Union Pacific Railroad stock on those ten shares? A. Yes, sir.

Q. Did General Garfield ever receive these? A. No, sir; never has received but \$329."²

To back up his new testimony Ames produced a number of diaries and memorandum books containing his accounts, and the committee plunged into the examination of these and of the accused Congressmen who demanded to be heard in rebuttal. With some of them little resulted but a flat contradiction of assertions with Ames, but with others the outcome was far more serious. Ames was able to bring evidence in the form of drafts on the Sergeant-at-Arms of the House which were either made out to particular members or bore their initials. Among others, Colfax, the retiring Vice-President, who had been Speaker in 1868, was hopelessly caught in a tangle of contradictions. Strangely enough, Garfield did not ask for a second hearing. In view of the fact that one historian has said that Garfield by his silence confessed his perjury,³ it is important to see from his letters at this juncture exactly what was in his mind, and what his motives were in refraining from offering any rebuttal.

Among the numerous letters that Garfield wrote, the following seem to cover the ground most completely. He said to Hinsdale (January 22): "You have seen the second testimony of Mr. Ames, utterly in conflict with his first and clearly inspired by a desire to protect himself against the

¹ *Crédit Mobilier Report*, pp. 295-296.

² *Ibid.*, p. 296.

³ E. P. Oberholtzer, *History of the United States*, Vol. II, p. 605.

threatened suit of the Company to account to them for the stock he did not sell as pretended. I am involved, as the whole subject now is, in the storm of general obloquy and in the falsehoods which Mr. Ames has thrown into it. No one can tell the extent of the damage it will work to individual reputations. It is clear to my mind that I shall suffer to some extent in consequence of his wickedness. He has produced a pretended memorandum of an account with me, a memorandum of his own which he says he copied from his books but these he has not produced. The only course for me to take for the present is to bear in silence whatever is cast upon me until the investigation is concluded, then I shall speak. The condition of panic into which the public mind is thrown makes it nearly impossible either to speak or listen with calmness and judicial fairness. In the mean time I bespeak the patience of my friends."

To Judge Black he wrote January 25 appealing for aid. After describing Ames's sudden accession of memory and his restatement of the situation as regards Garfield, he continued: "As I never gave him a receipt for the money loaned, so I never took a receipt when I paid it. I think I have somewhere a memorandum of the payment if I can find it. This material point, however, it seems to me you can help me in. The fact that three years ago I told the story to you and received from you for the first time a knowledge of Oakes Ames' transactions will prove that my motives for declining the stock are not of recent date. As near as I can make out our conversation was at the Arlington in the winter of 1869 and 1870. . . . You can probably also remember the time when I told you, I had seen Mr. Ames and declined to have anything further to do with the stock and repaid him the money I had received."

Still more important is a letter which he wrote (February 7) to E. Cowles, editor of the *Cleveland Leader*, for it indicates doubtless what he would have said, had he gone again on the stand, besides explaining why he did not testify. "The account he presents in my case I never saw and never heard of until he presented it. And he does not pretend to have any receipt or any evidence whatever except his own word

of the transaction he pretends took place between us. Nothing that he has presented would have the slightest weight in any court in the world. . . . I have told the Committee that I stand on my testimony. If they want anything further from me they will call on me. Mr. Ames has sworn on all sides of every subject connected with this topic and his own testimony compared with itself would impeach him in any court of justice. It has lately come to light that Ben Butler was with Ames most of the night prior to his second testimony and made Ames think several of us had combined to break him down in the House. This explains the wicked animus of his testimony. Malignant as he has been toward me in his testimony, he still admits that I neither received nor demanded anything from him except the alleged \$329."

To Howells and Austin he sent similar letters. To the latter, who asked him particularly about the \$329, he replied (February 17): "The reason I asked Mr. Ames to lend me money was because he had offered me a subscription to the Credit Mobilier stock and was willing to hold it for me until I could pay the subscription or until dividends should accrue. I had no business relations with any members of Congress and having just returned from Europe and being short of money I needed \$300 and asked Mr. Ames to lend it to me. He did so and said if I took the stock I could let the account run until we settled. He did not ask for any receipt and I gave him none. I waited for him to bring the charter of his company that I might understand exactly the pecuniary obligations I would assume by becoming a subscriber. He did not bring it and I never saw it. . . . So soon as Judge Black gave me his understanding of the Credit Mobilier I saw Mr. Ames and told him if he was still holding any of the stock for me he need do so no longer and that I would not take it. I had never agreed to take it and there was no bargain to cancel. I told him I would return the money in a short time and did so during that session. As I had given no receipt I asked none in return. It was a simple accommodation from one man to another and the only reason for my keeping it so long was that I thought I might subscribe for the stock. . . . Of his pretended sale of stock [*i.e.*, bonds]

in my behalf, I knew nothing. His private memoranda on this subject were wholly his own. . . . He might have entered stock account against you as well as against me. If the people will believe the testimony of a man blackened all over with contradictions and fraud as against my statement I cannot help it. It has been my intention to make a speech on the subject when the Committee reports. But all the partisan malice of the Democrats in the House and of the Press in the country is raging with a malignity that I have never before seen and every word that is spoken will be treated with all the unfairness and injustice that wickedness can devise. Add to the fact that the whole House is under the pressure of a panic and it is quite impossible to say what conclusions will be reached by the committee."

So the investigation dragged on to its conclusion with no further testimony from Garfield. On several occasions Ames was led by questions to refer again to the Garfield problem, and on one such a clear effort was made to bring out something discreditable to the latter in connection with the interview of January 15. Ames, it should be said, was a wretched witness, uncertain in memory, inaccurate in expression, exhibiting only a fixed intention to fasten ownership on as many Congressmen as possible, yet utterly vague on details. In this case, while he did not lend himself to the effort to blacken Garfield's reputation, he succeeded in giving what Garfield later called "a most remarkable account of the interview" by more or less hesitating replies to leading questions. (January 29.)

"Q. Did you have any conversation in reference to the influence this transaction would have on his election last fall?

A. Yes, he said it would be very injurious to him.

Q. What else in reference to that? A. I am a very bad man to repeat conversations; I cannot remember."

When later he was asked what Garfield said to him about the \$300, he replied: "I cannot remember half of it. . . . He stated that when he came back from Europe, being in want of funds, he called on me to loan him a sum of money. He thought he had repaid it. I do not know; I do not remember."

The questioners then turned again to Garfield's supposed

attempt to influence Ames and asked what he said about the damage to his reputation. Ames replied that Garfield said "it was a cruel thing. He felt very bad, was in great distress, and hardly knew what he did say."

"Q. Did he make any request of you to make no statement in reference to it? A. I am not positive about that.

Q. What is your best recollection? A. My impression is that he wanted to say as little about it as he could, and to get off as easily as he could. . . .

Q. I understand that, in substance, he desired you to say as little as possible about it? A. Yes, sir, and that is my desire.

Q. Will you repeat just about what he did say? A. I cannot remember the conversation well enough to repeat it."

Later Merrick, a Democrat on the committee, asked Ames this question. "In this conversation with Mr. Garfield, was anything said to you about your being an old man near the end of your career and of his being comparatively a young man? A. No, sir; nothing of that sort."¹

All that the committee got from Ames in addition was a hesitating statement, made after repeated questions, to the effect that the memorandum left by Garfield on Ames's table constituted an admission of Ames's position as to a genuine sale of stock.² Merrick also induced Ames, by a series of leading questions, to say that Garfield's trip to Europe took place two years *later* than the loan, after Ames had first said, "I do not know when he took his trip." His final remark was, "It is my impression it was nearly two years afterward, but I cannot remember dates." One gets the impression that he was inclined to agree to anything that was sufficiently pressed upon him and presented in a skillful manner.

Yet Ames seems to have felt disturbed by what he had said about Garfield, for on February 6, when asked if he wished to say anything further, he turned voluntarily to his case and at once said, "Mr. Garfield understands this matter as a loan; he says I did not explain it to him."

¹ *Crédit Mobilier Report*, pp. 358-361.

² *Ibid.*, p. 360.

"Q. You need not say what Mr. Garfield says; tell us what you think. A. Mr. Garfield might have misunderstood me.

Q. Mr. Garfield has told us how he understood it; what the committee desires to know of you is your understanding of the matter. A. I supposed it was like all the rest; but when Mr. Garfield says he mistook it for a loan; that he always understood it to be a loan; that I did not make any explanation to him and did not make any statement to him, I may be mistaken. I am a man of few words and I may not have made myself understood to him.

Q. We do not want you to mix up your recollection with that of Mr. Garfield. A. I have stated it as I remember it; but I may be mistaken.

Q. Do you remember it so now? A. I think I do."¹

It is not too much to say that Ames in these words practically abandoned his claim so far as Garfield was concerned or would have done so had not the members of the committee, alarmed at his evident desire to take back what he had earlier sworn to, refused to let him in so many words. Since, in addition, there was no evidence except Ames's own word that he had sold the stock, since he had no receipt of any kind from Garfield, since the latter's name was not on the books of the corporation as a stockholder, and since all agreed that after the alleged \$329 Garfield had never received any later dividend, Garfield hoped that the whole matter might drop as far as he was concerned, although he realized that the committee itself was none too reliable. He commented to Hinsdale on the methods used (February 8): "The Committee themselves have been stampeded by the general spirit of panic that has prevailed; and though some of them are good lawyers they have not applied the rules of evidence to this investigation. . . . I would not be willing to let any but my nearest friends know how keenly I have felt the wickedness and bitterness of this involvement."

When the Committee reported (February 18) Garfield described the scene in his journal: "The report produced a profound sensation and was listened to with silence and painful interest. It recommended expulsion in the cases of Ames

¹ *Crédit Mobilier Report*, p. 461.

and Brooks and found no cause of action against other members of the House. I am not satisfied with some of the statements of the Committee in reference to my case; but with Ames' memorandum and testimony before them, they probably thought they were doing right." No words could better illustrate Garfield's profound sense of fairness, for by them he excused men who had just publicly declared him guilty of lying or perjury. What the committee said was this: "He agreed to take ten shares of Credit Mobilier stock, but did not pay for the same. Mr. Ames received the 80 per cent dividend in bonds and sold them for 97 per cent, and also received the 60 per cent cash dividend, which, together paid the price of the stock and interest and left a balance of \$329. This sum was paid over to Mr. Garfield by a check on the Sergeant-at-Arms and Mr. Garfield then understood this sum was the balance of dividends after paying for the stock. Mr. Ames received all the subsequent dividends and the committee do not find that, since the payment of the \$329, there has been any communication between Mr. Ames and Mr. Garfield on the subject until this investigation began."¹ In so reporting the committee took Ames's word on each several point against Garfield's and ignored the inconsistent fact, admitted freely by Ames, that Garfield never had received any stock certificate or any dividends.

The comments of the press on the report indicated the severity of the blow to the reputations of the Congressmen concerned. The *New York Tribune*, February 19, went through the list, including Garfield's name, and said that "after the investigation began . . . he was anxious to have the \$329 considered as a loan." It concluded, "These men by their evasions and falsehoods confessed the transaction to be disgraceful." The *New York Times* of the same day observed: "Of the members referred to Messrs Kelley and Garfield present the most distressing figure. . . . The only possible comment on their cases is that had they taken a perfectly upright course in the matter and refused to have anything to do with the stock no occasion for contradictions could have arisen."

¹ *Crédit Mobilier Report*, p. vii.

In this political storm there was one individual who felt thoroughly at home, namely Butler, who, although the confidant, adviser and defender of Ames, yet felt himself at liberty to exult with impunity in the damage to the reputation of his rivals, since he himself was not implicated in the stock transactions. Apparently out of a sheer desire to hurt he took occasion, on February 5, when the post office appropriation was under consideration, to assail Garfield with contemptuous remarks and when the latter finally turned on him asking, "What personal quarrel does the gentleman desire to get up with me?" Butler retorted insolently: "I do not want any personal quarrel with you. *De mortuis nil nisi bonum.*¹ (Laughter.)" The allusion to Garfield's supposed political death under the *Crédit Mobilier* uproar was manifest. Garfield says in his diary, "Held the committee until near five when Butler took occasion to make an assault on me as brutal as his nature was capable of, and this statement is superlative of its strength."

Garfield remained silent in the violent debates which broke out during several days while resolutions for the expulsion or censure of Ames and Brooks were being considered, a silence which to many seemed only another confession of guilt. Here again one must turn to his letters to friends to discover what he thought of the committee report. To F. H. Mason of the Cleveland *Leader* he wrote (February 21): "The summing up of the Poland Committee in my case is strangely unjust. Their conclusion on the animus of the case is of course correct but their statement of the case in reference to me . . . is contradicted by Ames' testimony. With my positive statement that I never agreed to take the stock, but had only the option to take it, and with this admission of Mr. Ames at the very close of his testimony concerning me, I am at a loss to know how the Committee could have reached the conclusion they did." To General McLain he wrote (February 25): "He has produced no scrap of writing from me in evidence whatever, that I ever purchased the stock, no draft bearing my name or initials and though the committee find that there was nothing in my case deserving

¹ *Cong. Globe*, 42 Cong., 3 sess., p. 1129.

of censure, yet they have followed his statement of it in making up the summary of the case."

On the last day of the session he finally spoke, evidently more in sorrow than anger. After saying that he regretted that he had not been recalled to testify, he went on: "Though the committee acquit me of all charges of corruption . . . yet there is in the report a summing up of the facts in relation to me which I respectfully protest is not warranted by the testimony. I say this with the utmost respect for the Committee and without intending any reflection upon them. . . . I propose before long to make a statement to the public setting forth more fully the grounds of my dissent from the summing up to which I referred."¹ Poland in reply observed that the committee had been ready to hear him if he had so chosen and could not be held to have done him any injustice.

To anyone who has followed Garfield's career from year to year there is no mystery in this affair. There is no reason to believe that Garfield was not honest in his testimony, for nothing that Ames said really contradicted it. Things were so fixed between the men that Garfield could, if he chose, take the stock and Ames had arranged matters on paper so that it could be done with the least difficulty at any time. It was utterly unbusinesslike; a "simple accommodation between men," as Garfield called it. Garfield regarded Ames as a friendly colleague, and borrowed his \$300 as a matter of immediate convenience, and in no sense as inevitably part of a stock deal. That is plain. What led the committee to report as they did was probably in large part their determination to do nothing that should resemble whitewashing.

Garfield himself wrote upon Poland's action with his customary charity and absence of rancor.² "You asked me whether I know of any motive to induce the Poland committee to misrepresent my part of the case. I cannot say that I *know* of any. . . . The summing up in reference to me was a matter of very general surprise to those who had followed the testimony. Very many members expressed to me their dissent from the summing up . . . and not a few said

¹ *Cong. Globe*, 42 Cong., 3 sess., p. 2134.

² E. Cary, N. Y., June 11.

there was some ulterior motive behind. I prefer not to think so, but rather to attribute it, in part to oversight and in part to the fact that I did not attend the meeting of the committee nor take any pains to impress my view of the case upon the members. They may possibly have construed my silence into a sort of acquiescence in Mr. Ames' statement." He wrote to Reid (March 6): "I have kept silence during the winter thinking it not decent for me to take part in the pending controversy unless it should be turned directly towards me. I have been unwilling to bandy words with Oakes Ames and perhaps my silence has been misconstrued by the Committee and the country."

In an interview some years later (September 9, 1880) Judge Poland frankly admitted that this was the case. "If the committee had known what it subsequently knew," he said, "no such report would have been made. If General Garfield had come before us with the statement that he subsequently made, and which was true, our report would have been very different and it would not have reflected even inferentially upon Garfield. The Committee did not believe that he had done a wrong and we were satisfied that Ames had been practicing his great shrewdness, but the testimony was such as to give the report the turn it took. General Garfield made a mistake in not coming before us with the statement he afterwards made."

There can be no doubt that Garfield's silence was a grave blunder, both at the time and later, for to persons who did not know him or knew him only slightly it was inconceivable that anybody not guilty should allow such charges as Ames's to be made without instantly denying them. It was a blunder whose effects were to last to the end of his days and to pass into history after his death. One writer already quoted cites it as an admission of guilt. Rhodes, far more judicial-minded, said:¹ "From the evidence it is easy to see that a misunderstanding might have occurred, Ames and Garfield carrying away different ideas from their conversation." But he concluded, as one might well do, if looking only at what happened in the committee and in Congress, "What makes

¹ *History of the United States*, Vol. VII, p. 17.

the case damaging to Garfield is that the Poland committee who in addition to the record, had the advantage of seeing the witness face to face, adopted Ames' version."

It was in the same session that Garfield, as described in the preceding chapter,¹ felt himself compelled, as chairman of the Committee on Appropriations, to vote for the passage of the General Appropriation Bill, even though the salary amendment had been added to it against his opposition. It was this action, coming on top of the *Crédit Mobilier* affair that caused a sudden outburst against him among his constituents unlike anything in his previous experience.

Beginning with the final adjournment of the Forty-second Congress Garfield entered upon a phase of his career for which, prior to this time, there had been practically no precedent. He was now compelled to fight for his political life against a determined effort to drive him from his seat in Congress by means of a merciless assault upon his personal integrity. It was to him an appalling and abhorrent situation. That he, who had prided himself as living completely in the open, before God and man, and who had supposed that his reputation was beyond the reach of danger, should actually be compelled to stand on the defensive before his own constituents, was a shock and a humiliation. In many respects he was singularly ill prepared to meet such an attack owing to his lifelong habit of gaining by merit and performance, rather than by political methods. But such tests constitute the means by which character is revealed and the following years have a unique value in Garfield's career as the only occasion, prior to the last year of his life, in which he was compelled to make what he loathed above all things, a personal contest for himself.

When Congress adjourned he undoubtedly thought that his first duty was to set himself right before the world as far as concerned the *Crédit Mobilier*, but before a week had elapsed he discovered that he was mistaken. He wrote to his wife from Cleveland, March 10, where he had had to drag his tired body to take part in a lawsuit, "To my surprise I find that just now there is more agitation in regard to my

¹ See p. 503.

vote on the increase of salaries of members of Congress than there is in regard to Credit Mobilier. I cannot tell whether it is the hour of breaking up or not. I shall try to meet manfully whatever comes to my lot; but it is hard to bear the small talk of little carpers who know nothing of the case."

What began as "small talk" presently swelled into a murmur and then a roar of criticism and denunciation in the nineteenth district. Quotations from some of the editorials and letters in the newspapers give some idea of the sudden tide which rose and flowed over the counties of the Reserve. The *Geneva Times*, March 20, summed up the general attitude when it said: "It was General Garfield's duty to carry his determined opposition in committee clear through to the end and protest by his vote. . . . It was no time to balance dollars and cents against a clear principle of right. Here is just where he made the one grand mistake of his life."

"One of the Farmers" wrote from Orwell, Ashtabula County, to the *Cleveland Herald*: "The dissatisfaction with and sorrow for the vote of General Garfield on the increase of salaries is almost universal. . . . It is a fact that not one man in ten of this community stands by our representative, nor can one in ten be found who would vote for him should he be running for Congress today."

From the midst of the uproar Garfield's political and personal friends wrote him from every county puzzled and inquiring letters, asking for explanations and for ammunition with which they might try to defend him. On March 14 Austin wrote: "The feeling against the retroactive clause in both parties and among both your friends and your enemies is intense. They say you stood manfully until the last vote when of all other times it was most needed and then you *weakened*. . . . This feeling is almost universal among all your best friends. . . . A statement should be given of the facts. No one here sees the *Globe*. . . . Nothing of your protest has been seen or known. This is here regarded as much more formidable than the Credit Mobilier affair."

There can be no doubt that this situation bore heavily on Garfield where he was ill fitted to resist. All through his life, his most vulnerable trait was his craving for friendship, for

sympathetic affection, for approbation. To have his own constituents turn against him when he was conscious of no evil, when he felt that he deserved their love and support, struck him where he was almost defenseless. As Hayes remarked of him,¹ "He could not face a frowning world," for there was no solid wall of self-esteem behind which he could retire when tempests blew. Under this whirlwind of denunciation his emotions were not so much rage as grief and humiliation at the idea that he, an honorable man, should be so unjustly treated by people who had known him for years as their representative. "I feel this morning," he wrote Hinsdale (March 19), "though I would not say this except to you, like throwing up my position in disgust and retiring from a field where ten years of earnest, honest work goes for naught."

In answer to his friends' appeals Garfield wrote several letters, explaining clearly why he had voted for the appropriation bill after having opposed the salary amendment and laying stress upon what none of his critics took into account, namely, his responsibility, as chairman of the Committee on Appropriations, for getting the bill through. His first letter, of March 12 to Austin, has already been quoted, since it contained a full account of his action in the conference committee. Ten days later he again emphasized this aspect. "I am sure that those who wish to look fairly and intelligently at the case, will not fail to consider the fact that I was charged with the very great responsibility of seeing that the twelve great appropriation bills became laws, before the Congress expired. And if any one of them had failed I should have been held accountable to the Congress and the country and the disgrace of the failure would have fallen mainly upon me. The House and the Senate forced the salary clause upon my bill against my voice and vote. For that they were responsible. I was not. I then put the bill in the best shape I could and helped to pass it, after informing the House that I had done all I could to prevent the adoption of the salary clause.

¹ Williams, *Life of R. B. Hayes*, Vol. II, p. 364.

"I might have voted against the conference report, after signing it, but it would have been carried nevertheless. I should thereby have escaped the kind of criticism that is now being made upon me, but I should then have been justly criticised as behaving in an unmanly and cowardly manner. If by refusing to sign the conference report and attacking the bill in the House, I could have prevented its passage, I am very clear that the country would have held me responsible for all the evils of an extra session. That, not the salary clause, would have been the theme of discussion. I knew I was charged with the responsibility of getting the appropriation bills through, but I did not dream that any intelligent man would charge me with having secured the passage of the Salary bill. Some of my best friends regret the course I took and think I made a mistake. In this they may be right. . . . I hope my friends will remember that during the last four days of the session I did not average four hours of sleep in each twenty-four, but devoted every moment (not given to eating and sleeping) to pushing through the appropriation bills and to the completion of the public business entrusted to my care." He sent similar letters to Howells and a number of editorial friends who were standing by him, furnishing them with arguments which they promptly used.

But this was not enough. What was imperatively needed was that Garfield himself should come out in the open and not stand silent in sensitive dignity, leaving his defense to his friends. As in the case of the *Crédit Mobilier* investigation, his motives were incomprehensible to most men. To remain silent under attack struck the people of the Western Reserve as either an admission of guilt or a weakness of spirit equivalent to cowardice, and great numbers who were ready to follow him if appealed to could only wait, not knowing what to say or do. Furthermore, the instant this uproar began, all the anti-Garfield elements in every part of the district sprang into activity and undertook to fan the flame with a view to driving him out of public life. As usual Warren led the way, and a convention called to nominate candidates for a constitutional convention turned aside to pass resolutions of censure on him, demanding that he resign.

"The convention was furiously mad to get at you," wrote a friend (T. J. McLain, March 29). "It was an anti-Garfield one on general principles. I think 99/100 of the Republicans of Trumbull would *censure* you for that vote." This did not particularly disturb him, for Warren was an old center of disaffection. "There is a little knot of people about Warren," he wrote to a friend, "who have always been bitterly hostile to me. . . . They have been so overwhelmed with the strength of my friends that they have kept silent for several years. This salary business has let them loose and they fixed up the resolution in a thin convention called by parties for another purpose and managed to carry it." But when similar resolutions were carried in Ashtabula and Lake counties the blow was evidently a serious one.

He wrote to Howells (April 3): "The action of the Ash-tabula Convention hurts me more than I am willing to tell anybody but you. Were I to consult my own feelings I would instantly withdraw from a service that brings such fruit as the result of ten years of the best and most faithful service I have been able to give." April 2 he wrote in the journal: "There does not seem to be as much fight in me as formerly and of all things that I loathe and detest it is a contest in relation to myself. I can fight battles for others but to fight men for disliking me, for disapproving of my course, hurts my pride and self-love more than anything I have been called upon to meet." A few days later he observed rather bitterly to Hinsdale (April 4): "You know that I have always said that my whole public life was an experiment to determine whether an intelligent people would sustain a man in acting sensibly on each proposition that arose and in doing nothing for mere show or for demagogical effect. . . . Perhaps it is true that the demagogue will succeed when honorable statesmanship will fail. If so, public life is the hollowest of all shams. . . . Ames and Colfax are received by their constituents with ovations. My constituents are hunting for ropes to hang me with. And this is public life and public justice. If it were not so serious it would be supremely ridiculous."

From the danger of leaning too far backward, Garfield

was now saved by the group of faithful friends in the nineteenth district, who insisted that he must undertake a positive campaign of enlightenment in his own behalf. In the first they demanded that he make it clear that he had not drawn the back pay. One of Garfield's first acts after returning to Washington in March had been to instruct the Sergeant-at-Arms of the House to turn back the extra pay into the treasury—to "cover it in," as the technical phrase was—so that it was beyond the reach of payment. He told this to Austin and others, but forbade them to mention it lest it should seem a concession on his part to popular clamor or a parade of superior virtue. He wrote to Howells (April 3) on this point: "I have been too proud to tell of it, but I tell you in confidence for your information that I not only have not drawn the extra salary, but nearly two weeks ago ordered it covered into the Treasury beyond either my reach or the reaching of my heirs in the case of my death. I want nothing said about this, for I do not wish to parade myself on the subject nor embarrass others who thought they did right and proper to take their additional pay." In this last sentence stands forth one of Garfield's most characteristic scruples, a regard for the differing opinions of his colleagues so deep-rooted that, for fear of seeming to blame them, he refrained from even protecting himself.

The day after the Lake County resolutions of censure (March 27) Austin wrote to Garfield with direct frankness: "You must see that . . . there are times when a man must unsheathe the sword and *wade in*. I think therefore, you must, if you hope to succeed in regaining public confidence, lose sight of some of your modesty (not your prudence) and take hold of this case with a full determination to win. But if you lay still after the vote of yesterday, your silence will be construed into weakness and perhaps guilt." Two days later Hall wrote from Ravenna: "You should come into the district and see some of your personal friends and start the reaction. . . . The people must have an opportunity to know the truth and the hour has come for you to come to the front with it. I want to encourage you to be firm and brave."

The next step was for Garfield, sorely against his will but

under the urgings of Austin, Hinsdale, Howells, Hall and others, to go back to Hiram and, in conference with his supporters, to prepare a defense and explanation of the salary vote to be circulated, over his own name. He entered upon the task with low spirits. "This journey I am now taking," he wrote back to his wife (April 11), "is one of the most vague and unsatisfactory in its objects and prospects of any I have begun. It can hardly end in more than promises." At Hiram he found popular temper sullen and sour, but was heartened by meeting Hinsdale and many other friends whose assurances of undiminished confidence and support warmed him into greater cheerfulness. The journal recalls by its introspective entries, the days of twenty years earlier. "April 21. I wonder what my boys will think of it twenty years hence. I wonder what I will, if I am alive. Perhaps all this trouble may look very small and be laughed over. Perhaps not, for it may mark the decline and fall of my political power. Let either fate befall. I shall hope to make culture and sweetness out of it."

Following the advice of his friends Garfield now drew up a statement of his record on the salary vote and prepared to send it broadcast throughout the district. After this step his letters home took for the first time a somewhat confident tone. (April 24.) "I will try to tell you how goes the fight. Every part of the Dist. will be fully reached by my letter and pamphlet before the end of this week. I have already told you that it was evident that the reaction had set in;—this is more marked now than ever before and the very violence of the feeling will help the reaction. As the case now stands I notice, as among the elements in play:

"1st The Newspapers. Excepting two of the Cincinnati papers and the *Akron Beacon*, the press outside the District have not assailed me very heavily but some of them have positively defended me. In the Dist., with the exception of the *Conneaut Report* and the half-and-half course of the *Warren Chronicle*, all the Republican papers are friendly and some of them strongly defend me.

"2nd. The old set of malcontents who hated me whether or no, are and will be as bitter as they can be. They are the

group of men who either wanted my place or wanted to run me while I held it and failed in both. *Hinc illæ Lachrymæ.*

"3rd. The narrow, mean men who see a dollar more plainly than any other fact of life, were deeply offended and many of them have so committed themselves that they will stick to their word sullenly for consistency's sake.

"4th. The good well-meaning friendly men who had become excited generally over the corruption of public men as portrayed in the newspapers, looked upon this salary vote as a proof of further corruption and were grieved to abandon one in whom they had had so much faith. They, I think will generally come back and will stand by.

"5th. The hasty, passionate men, who see only the surface and think if a man gets a bloody nose he is mangled to death, were sadly sure that I was dead, and seem joyfully surprised to find that I still live and breathe, weight two hundred pounds, and sleep o' nights, and are beginning to say knowingly, 'He's plucky, I tell you, he'll come out on top yet.' These will come back and stay—till the next storm.

"6th. The clear-headed unstamped men who did not fully understand it as first, but who said 'wait and see.' These are standing up to me with a magnificent fighting front that makes the blood tingle all along my veins and almost makes me glad the row came. Here are some of the captains and heroes of this class—Halsey Hall and his father, Howells, Austin, Kinsman, Frank Hutchins, Conrad, Wolcott, Converse, *Burke*, Cannon, Morgan, Harrington, McLain, Fitch, Spencer, Scofield and other such.

"Hiram next to Warren, has been the worst town in the Dist. I think it is now in a mixed condition of anger at me, shame at itself, and faith in me and my future; and under such circumstances, it takes its usual course and acts silly, glum, silent."

A few days later he wrote (April 26): "The tone is bettering here in Hiram. Some of the cantankerous ones are beginning to roost lower." By the time he returned to Washington, May 3, he felt ready to enter in the journal that "the salary storm is abating." The *Letter to the Republican Voters of the Nineteenth District* went, as he said, into every region,

and was vigorously sustained by his editorial friends. T. J. McLain of Warren, who had at first been carried away by the excitement, now told him that the letter "had confirmed the timid and made his enemies fighting mad. A good sign."

The letter was not reprinted in Garfield's *Works*, probably with good reason, but as a specimen of straightforward argument and persuasion it stands high in his writings. Particularly noteworthy in it is the candor with which he sets forth the situation as a whole, and the absence of bitterness with which he speaks of his sense of injustice in being held solely responsible for an increase which he did his best to prevent. Contrary to what an ordinary man would have written under the circumstances, it was not a fighting letter. It was an appeal to reason.

One point which the critics of the "salary grab" wholly overlooked was that, while the voting of a salary increase on the last day of a session was a new thing, the retroactive feature was not only not new but had been almost customary, and had taken place without creating any popular outcry. What was especially interesting was that in 1856 Garfield's predecessor, Giddings, had profited in a closely similar way without a voice being raised in criticism. On this point he wrote to Reid (May 20): "What your editorial friends say of my conduct on the Salary Question seems to be founded on this mistaken fact. In criticising the back pay he sets up a standard which has never before been asserted in this country and proposed to judge men by this *ex post facto* rule." He showed that in 1856 Congress raised its pay by 150 per cent, making it retroactive over seventeen months, and concluded: "Now I am not arguing that this was defensible, but I do argue that the public press and public opinion did not denounce it as robbery or theft. . . . Now if a new rule ought to be established, let it be established, but I do not think it just to judge a man's past conduct by a new rule."

By May 19 Garfield was able to write to Austin: "It has been surprising to see how few attacks have been made since my letter appeared. The voice of the press has been almost unanimous in my favor since that time. The leading papers everywhere that have noticed it, have taken my side or at

least have said that I acted from proper motives." The comment of the *Nation* (May 1, 1873) on the letter shows how his overpowering sense of official duty was not accepted by some reformers. "There is nothing in all this to destroy confidence in General Garfield's integrity or usefulness, though we are satisfied he was mistaken as to his duty. Some such rude shock as the defeat of the Appropriation Bill on a question of common honesty would have been valuable in a way not to be estimated in dollars and cents. But he has shown himself on too many occasions one of the few Congressmen on whom the eye of an American citizen can rest with satisfaction to be lightly laid on the shelf by any constituency."

From this he turned to what he regarded as a far more serious matter, the assertion of the Poland Committee that he had agreed to buy ten shares of *Crédit Mobilier* stock. When he began this task, at Hiram, he wrote to his wife (April 23): "I am at work on Credit Mobilier. You will see how difficult my work is when you remember I am to address the wicked and reckless newspaper public and to come in conflict with the Poland Committee and Mr. Ames and must also incidentally allude to nearly every man whose name was connected with the subject. This will be unpleasant to nearly all of them for my case being contrasted with theirs will not be flattering to them. To do all this justly and fairly to them and to myself will be no easy task."

By the nineteenth of May he had completed his labors and was able to send off to newspapers, friends and constituents a pamphlet of nearly thirty pages. In sending it to Hall of Ravenna he said (May 19): "I have read the principal portions to several strong men here and they all unite in saying that the general discussion of what the *Crédit Mobilier* is, is much clearer than anything that has yet appeared; in fact, I do not believe that one man in ten thousand knows what the *Crédit Mobilier* was or what it has done. This business of self-defence is the most unlovely of anything I have ever undertaken to do. But it seemed necessary and I thought it best to do the work so thoroughly that nobody could say that any portion of it had been neglected." Garfield's letter book contains similar notes accompanying the document

when sent to Whitelaw Reid, Murat Halsted, E. L. Godkin, Charlton Lewis, C. F. Adams, Samuel Bowles, beside many of his Congressional colleagues such as Dawes, Bingham, Cox and others.

The pamphlet (*Review of the Transactions of the Credit Mobilier Company*) is devoted to a rather minute examination of Ames's testimony bearing on the charges he made against Garfield, bringing out the hopeless tangle of confusion in his statements and the vague and inadequate nature of what he brought forward as evidence. In contrast to many of Garfield's private letters of the preceding winter which covered the same field, it is a cool, dispassionate and purely defensive piece of work. So great was Garfield's desire to avoid additional personal controversy that he eliminated everything from consideration except the bare analysis of evidence. He tried to hit no one, but to disprove the Poland Committee's summing up. At the end, in his concluding pages, he made his own personal appeal. "If there be a citizen of the United States who is willing to believe that for \$329, I have bartered away my good name, and to falsehood have added perjury these pages are not addressed to him. If there be one who thinks that any part of my public life has been gauged on so low a level as these charges would place it, I do not address him—I address those who are willing to believe that it is possible for a man to serve the public without personal dishonor. . . . In the discussion of the many grave and difficult questions of public policy which have occupied the thoughts of the nation during the last twelve years, I have borne some part; and I confidently appeal to the public records for a vindication of my conduct."

To one reading the pamphlet in the light of later events it seems as though it would have been stronger in its effect had Garfield revealed more of what was his dominant feeling, that of indignation that his good name should have been carelessly and recklessly assailed and that the committee should have ventured to take Ames's worthless word against his own on an issue of veracity. But Garfield's pride and his sensitive desire to be fair to everyone, even including Ames,

his defamer, and the Poland Committee, whose report had wronged him, inhibited any such methods of self-defense. As in the salary matter, he was willing to appeal only to calm reason. The *Nation* found the pamphlet entirely adequate. It said (June 24, 1880): "This has the appearance of a straightforward and satisfactory explanation of his apparent connection with the affair. Weak points of the evidence are not picked out for refutation and strong ones ignored, as is common in such cases, but the strongest ones are presented verbatim, followed by explanations of their bearing or origin."

An interesting letter to Colonel Plumb at this time (June 9) shows how Garfield estimated the psychological effect of his experiences of the winter and spring: "It was many weeks before I saw the good of these trials that were brought upon me. Finally, however, it came to me that I had enjoyed the discipline of success for many years, but that I had not passed through the discipline of misfortune and perhaps its lessons were needed [to show] that I had been indulging in a dream that it had been possible for a public man not only to be right but to live above suspicion so that not a shadow could fall upon his name. I had made this hope a sort of idol and was cherishing it with too much affection. One good result of the winter's experience was to break this idol to pieces and to teach me afresh the lesson that it must not be my chief business to appear right, but rather to be right. Though conscious of having done no wrong in this whole matter, I suffered far more than I ought to have suffered, but for the idol I had built up."

The publication of the two defenses by no means terminated Garfield's political fight for life; they rather marked the first steps. They drew approving letters from hundreds of correspondents and approving or discriminatingly friendly editorials in newspapers, and furious attacks in the journals whose editors were determined to crush him. In Ohio the same month brought an unpleasant event when the Republican state convention, on May 21, passed resolutions which, as he wrote, must have been intended to strike him a backhanded blow. "We denounce all Credit Mobilier trans-

actions, whatever their form" and "we condemn without reserve the voting for or receiving increased pay for services already rendered."¹ "It remains to be seen," he wrote in his journal, May 22, "whether the men inside Ohio politics are going to dispose of life and honor as they please. Whatever they may assume to do they have never had my honor put in their keeping and I don't intend they shall." But it was abundantly clear that if he intended to escape being driven from public life, he must "camp in the district" and devote the rest of the season to conciliation and explanation. So politics engulfed and engrossed him all summer.

But the old sense of isolation and cheerlessness which had depressed him in April were gone, for by this time his political friends were rallying to his support in every county, and his correspondence day by day bore witness to their fighting spirit and their whole-hearted devotion to him. To Garfield this came as the breath of life. "I would almost welcome such a storm," he wrote to Horace Steele of Painesville (June 24), "as has been blowing over, for the noble friendships it has tested and developed."

In the early summer Garfield made three public addresses. On June 25 he spoke at Willoughby; on July 2 he made a carefully prepared address at Western Reserve University, on "The Future of the Republic,"² and two days later he delivered a fourth of July oration at Ravenna which was cut short by a thundershower. The Hudson address was one of a kind wherein Garfield was at his best; reflections on the large problems confronting the United States and an attempt to grapple with the future aspect of the new one created by the railroad system. Not a trace of the severe mental suffering he had undergone nor of the political dangers then surrounding him appeared in the oration, but there can be little doubt that the *Crédit Mobilier* affair underlay his apprehensions of danger to the Republic from the uncontrolled and sinister power of railways.

On July 12 he reported to Austin the results of his observations. "I saw men at Ravenna, on the fourth, from nearly

¹ *Annual Cyclopedica*, p. 609.

² *Works of James A. Garfield*, Vol. II, p. 46.

every township in Portage county and at a little gathering at Hall's, in the afternoon, the situation was quite fully discussed. The men present were firm in the opinion that Portage County is still unshaken in its sentiments, and can any day be carried as a unit for me in every township. . . . It is very touching to see with what splendid manly friendship a select group of men are standing up to me in this storm."

All through the summer Garfield's correspondence ran on the subject of the political situation and especially the temper of his constituents. By August he felt that the storm in its worst phases had died out. "So far as my own district is concerned," he wrote to J. Q. Smith (August 5), "the tide has not only turned but I am confident that I could be renominated and elected this month if the case arose. The only elements that I do not yet wholly see the extent of are these two—the movement among the ambitious politicians of the State who think I stand in their way and who want to use the present storm as a means of killing me off; and a small knot of men in the House of Representatives who would like more prominent positions than they have yet been able to command and think they would be advanced if I were out of the way. The first class will do what they can to injure me in the state this fall and the second may attempt some intrigue in regard to committees next winter. . . . I know of but two papers in the United States that have spoken of my review of the Cred. Mob. otherwise than as an unanswerable statement of the case—and these two are the N. Y. *Sun* and the *Cin. Times and Chronicle*. The one the Hyena of the Press, the other its Jackall, or Jackass, as you prefer."

The two difficulties foreseen by Garfield in this letter were successively encountered in the autumn. In response to a letter from the State Central Committee he announced his readiness to help in the campaign of Governor Noyes for reëlection, but when the time came for going on the stump, he found himself practically ignored. Speaking appointments were made for the governor on the Reserve without consulting the local committees or informing Garfield. By September 19 he could write to Austin, "The evidence begins to accumulate that Gov. Noyes and his lieutenant Hart, are

attempting to give me the go-by in reference to meetings." Garfield showed no resentment but bided his time and found pleasure in delivering an address at Burton, September 16, on the settlement of the Western Reserve. Garfield's stump-ing was brief. He opened September 30 at Paris, Portage County, with a speech which he summarized thus in his journal: "My line of discussion was this, first, The origin and growth of political parties, the reason why they originate and grow; second, the reasons why they die, illustrated by the history of the Democratic and Republican parties; third the present duty of the two political parties, showing that this is a campaign of personalities, with principles very little discussed. I then discussed some of the leading charges that are being made against the Republican Party, Credit Mobilier, Salaries etc. and also discussed the panic resulting from the failure of Jay Cooke, showing what the panic would have been if we had had the old system of banks in states."

"It is very gratifying," he reported to his wife (October 7), "that after all the political storm of the spring and summer I am having such fine and enthusiastic audiences. I have no doubt that I could recapture the District if I had time to speak at the leading points. I think I shall do so as it is, but not so certainly as I otherwise would. On October 4 he spoke at Baconsburg, eight miles from Warren, the center of opposition, "in the Disciple church." "Several malignant salary men were present who put a number of questions personal to myself and reflecting on the Republican party. I spoke two hours and a quarter and made a very full and careful statement of the history of salary legislation and particularly of the Salary increase of last March. This, I think, is the most successful speech I have made, so far as it relates to me personally."

He spoke in several other places in the district with satisfaction to himself, but noting general signs of party apathy. The financial panic, growing every week, cast its black shadow over everything, and the party in power, as always, was bound to pay the penalty. The result justified his fears, for the Republicans lost the governorship and the legislature.

Allen (Democrat)	Noyes (Republican)	Senate	House
214,654	213,837	21-14	57-45

In his journal Garfield wrote (October 20): "I sum up the causes of the election thus. First, the apathy which generally follows the Presidential election. Second, the management of the campaign wherein a few men tried to take all the glory of it and ride into power by ignoring their comrades. The first cause brought a low vote. The second cause produced great scratching and final defeat of the ticket."

Garfield was careful to make it clear, at the same time, that the scratching was not done where his own influence was strong. He wrote to Austin (October 21): "Of course those who have run the campaign on 'Credit Mobilier' and 'Salary Grab' for their only political capital will still say that these two things lost us the campaign. And no doubt these things had something to do with it. But they were not the chief causes or we would have seen similar results in other Republican states. Now so far as this district is concerned it will not do for the managers of the campaign to lay the blame of the defeat upon me. . . . So far as I have seen there was less falling off in the towns where I spoke than in any others in these counties. . . . I agree with Judge Kinsman that if the Trumbull and Ashtabula committees had called me to hold such meetings as I held in various places the governorship would have been saved." This is an interesting evidence of Garfield's belief in his own campaigning power.

Immediately after the campaign the anti-Garfield papers, notably the Cincinnati *Times*, the New York *Sun* and a few others demanded that Garfield be deposed from his chairmanship in the Congress to assemble in December, and, as usual, Garfield himself was rigidly scrupulous in abstaining from speaking to Blaine on the subject or even seeing him, although he was in Washington for the whole of November. Rumors reached him of various plans being considered by Blaine. On November 19 he wrote to Austin: "There are no indications from which I can judge of the outcome in regard to committees. Butler is breathing out threatenings and

slaughter against all his enemies and will no doubt do all he can to break down Mr. Dawes and myself." He went further in writing to Hinsdale (November 24): "I am inclined to suspect he [Blaine] will try to dodge between the two courses that lie open before him. The demand to depose Mr. Dawes and myself he will not accede to. The other course, namely to put us in our old places he will not take if he can avoid it. And though I do not know I am inclined to think he will adopt the middle ground and give us the Chairmanships of some other committees. My personal impression is that if I do not have my old place on the Ways and Means I will refuse to accept anything; that will make the sharp issue between that and nothing and let him take the consequences. . . . If Blaine takes the course I have suggested it will be only for the sake of carrying water on both shoulders in keeping friendship with both parties, but that will not keep mine."

A few days before the opening of Congress a caucus of the Ohio members of Congress met in Garfield's house and agreed to present an Ohio man as candidate for House postmaster. "After I left the room," Garfield's journal reads, "the remainder of the delegation resolved to send a committee to Mr. Blaine telling him that Ohio had heard with regret the proposition of the newspapers to remove me from the Committee on Appropriations and expressed a desire that it should not be done." Garfield wrote of this to Hinsdale (December 4): "I was gratified and surprised but I asked them not to make any request for me. I have followed rather austere," he added, "the rule of self-respect and have kept aloof from all combinations." On December 5 the journal reports: "The speaker announced the standing committees for the 43rd Congress. After all the noise and gossip on this subject, Blaine has done the manly thing in standing by the old leaders of the House. The so-called Credit Mobilier Congressmen occupy all the old places. I am chairman of the Committee on Appropriations and member of the Committee on Rules." So ended the last crisis of this momentous year. Garfield had escaped the humiliation of being deposed from his committee, but it seems that the escape was

a narrow one. "It now appears," he wrote to Hinsdale, "that Mr. Blaine did contemplate changing places between Mr. Dawes and myself, but Mr. Dawes thought such action would be misconstrued and he preferred not to make the exchange." He could never be quite sure of Blaine.

In his annual letter to Hinsdale (January 2), Garfield summed up what the year just closing had meant to him. "To me," he said, "the last year has been the stormiest of my life. I would almost translate the A.D. which prefaces 1873 'Anno Diaboli.' And yet the year has been a lion in whose body I have found some honey. I do not know that I have been really what ought to be called an ambitious man; certainly not in the bad sense of the word ambitious. But yet I have done some climbing, and have at last climbed to a place where the wind blows chilly and cold and furiously. At times it has seemed to be an ill [wind] that blowed [*sic*] nobody any good. Still it has swept away some dreams and illusions that I am glad are gone. On the whole I have conquered more of the difficulties that the old year brought me, than I thought, for a time, would be possible. Whether I shall win the next battle, I regard as still doubtful, though not so doubtful as it appeared months ago. It is a battle I do not want to fight, and yet it seems necessary that I should fight it even if I were sure to lose it. . . . Indeed 1873 has been like a furious Iconoclast. It has broken its lances with friends and parties and churches and has left many men broken and scarred. It has been a year of ferment, a year of trouble; a year of lessons and a year that I part with, without tears."

The real battle, however, would come in the spring and summer of 1874, when Garfield's constituents would have a chance to vote upon him for renomination and reëlection. All during the session of 1873-1874, in the midst of his arduous labors with the appropriation bills, Garfield was preparing for the contest, corresponding with his friends in the nineteenth district, discussing rumors and exchanging news about political feeling, about the attitude of individuals, about the chances of the opposition in various places. As early as November, 1873, he learned that the anti-Gar-

field men were determined to defeat him at all costs and that if he did succeed in getting a renomination they would then run an independent candidate in hopes of splitting the party and letting in a Democrat. His letters show that he arranged through Austin, as manager, a thorough canvass of the district. "I will abide by all your engagements," he wrote (January 27), "and send you means to pay all expenses. There are political friends here that will aid in raising the necessary funds if I am not able to carry the load alone."

By March Austin had become convinced that the failure of the opposition to find a single strong candidate was sure to wreck their plans and he so reported to Garfield when, with Judge Kinsman of Warren, he paid a visit to Washington. Garfield wrote to Hall of Ravenna (March 11): "Mr. Austin and Judge Kinsman have been here some days and we have had a full consultation on the political situation in the District. I have also had news from Ashtabula and Lake counties. . . . It is pretty clear from what Mr. Austin says that the policy of the enemy will be to put up as many candidates as possible hoping that each may draw some local strength to himself and that if they succeed in breaking me down they will unite on one of their number. I suspect that will be the hardest part of the program." But Garfield at this time found little zest in the news, however favorable. "I have sinned against my constitution," he wrote to Dr. L. L. Pinkerton (March 14), "until it is ready to break to pieces. . . . I am tired in every nerve and muscle. . . . I think however I can beat all comers in any fight they choose to make if I want to. But I am too weary to think of fighting now and I greatly prefer to let the whole thing go by. Still, I presume I shall make the fight and believe I shall win it."

Just at this moment, when it seemed as though his enemies on the Reserve were sure to lose their fight, Garfield found another mine exploded under him, not so dangerous in his eyes as the *Crédit Mobilier Report*, but destined to cause him fully as much trouble. This was the affair of the De Golyer pavement. During the winter and spring of 1874 a joint committee of the two houses undertook an investigation of the administration of the District of Columbia, since

1871 under a territorial government, and rapidly discovered cases of extravagance and laxity suggesting corruption, in the awarding of paving contracts. On March 13, when attention was focused upon the circumstances connected with the laying of a large amount of wooden block pavement known as the De Golyer pavement, Congressman Richard C. Parsons (of Cleveland) testified that in the spring of 1872 he had been retained by G. R. Chittenden, to present the arguments for this pavement before the board of public works, with the hope of getting a contract to the amount of \$700,000. After he had presented his argument, but before the matter was settled, he was called home to Cleveland, and then induced Garfield, as a friend and neighbor, to conclude the matter. "His being retained in the case was purely accidental," said Parsons,¹ "and he consented to act for me as an old friend of many years standing, to relieve me from embarrassment." Parsons then left and when he received his fee, which was a large one (\$16,000), he deposited part of it to Garfield's account. Of this amount \$10,000 was contingent upon Chittenden's securing the contract. All this seemed aboveboard, but the unpleasant part of the affair was that the pavement firm also paid out no less than \$72,000 more to other individuals who employed, behind the scenes, whatever influence they had. The inference was unavoidable that the contract was expected to be grossly corrupt, if it was worth while to pay nearly one-seventh of the total amount to secure it.

Certain newspapers at once detected something political and improper in the employment of Parsons and especially of Garfield. On March 16 the latter received clippings from the Chicago *Tribune* containing a severe attack, and presently other papers joined in. The form in which the charge finally crystallized was stated in its most extreme form by the New York *Independent* (July 30, 1880): "Of course Mr. Garfield's argument was successful. How could it be otherwise? He was chairman of the Committee on Appropriations. Every cent of money voted to the district had to come through him. Shepard could not afford to refuse him any-

¹ *Senate Report*, No. 453, 43 Cong., 1 sess., Vol. II, p. 1075.

thing that he asked, and Mr. Garfield knew it when he asked and received for his services a fee which would have been grossly extravagant but for his official position. . . . For five thousand dollars he was willing to use his position as guardian of the Treasury of the Nation to make the District Government award a profitable contract."

When attacked in this way Garfield, warned doubtless by his experience the year before, did not keep silence, but promptly took the field in his own defense. Writing to Major Hubbard of the *Chicago Tribune*, April 16, he insisted that his action was perfectly simple and aboveboard; that it was wholly unrelated to the underground manœuvres of Chittenden. "I had no connection," he said, "with the Company in their interest, in their contract, or in any relation to them in any way whatever. The fact of my being a member of Congress," he said, "does not disable me from the legitimate practice of law and this was as legitimate as any other practice." As for the agent, Chittenden, who employed Parsons and also paid a lobbyist, Garfield remarked: "I never saw Chittenden until the time I was preparing the brief, when he furnished me with various certificates from parties in Chicago and San Francisco in regard to the merits of the pavement. . . . If Chittenden used money in an improper manner it was known neither by Parsons nor myself and the attempt of any newspaper to make wrong out of it is grossly unjust."

To Hinsdale he said (April 20): "In regard to the pavement case, I propose to stand on my rights as an American citizen. . . . There is nothing either of law or morals to prohibit a member of Congress from practicing his profession and so far as I hear, every member of the Committee of Investigation says that I did what I had a plain right to do. . . . The only unpleasant thing about it is that the same company that employed Parsons as their lawyer also employed lobbyists to help get the contract. But neither Parsons nor I knew that anybody was employed but ourselves. I made a careful study of the whole subject in the most open manner as I would have done in any other law case."

From this ground he did not budge. He explained to Hins-

dale (April 30) that the large size of Parson's fee, in which he shared to the extent of one-third, was the customary thing in cases where the fee was "contingent." "When it is considered that the work the parties were to do was to amount to \$700,000 the contingent fee of Parsons will not be considered an extravagant one. Judge Black charged the Phillips Bros. \$90,000 for the work we did for them in Philadelphia, and he had two-thirds of the fee and I one third. This was on account of the large sum involved, namely \$400,000. Nobody would criticize that as an extravagant fee under the circumstances and yet the amount involved was but little more than one half of that involved in Parsons' work."

The charge that he employed his official position he seems to have entirely ignored in these earlier letters, possibly because, since it was wholly imaginary, he did not fully grasp its dangerous character. Later on he was called upon to give it more attention.

By May Garfield found that there were two avowed rivals in his district—S. D. Northway of Ashtabula, a perfectly honorable antagonist, and State Senator Jones of Warren, around whom concentrated all the anti-Garfield bitterness and long-cherished jealousies that flourished in that town—and one or two possible ones, Judge Glidden chiefly. From none of them did he think any real danger was to be apprehended and he was strongly inclined to accept an offer of the Phillips Brothers to go to Europe for the summer and sell oil lands. This would have meant a great deal for him in his weariness and he longed for the sea voyage, but finally gave it up. He wrote (July 6): "I regretfully declined their offer. . . . I need the trip and the money. But my friends in the district are timid and think I ought not to be absent during the ante-convention campaign."

So Garfield stayed in the district and carried on his campaign for delegates through his friends, since it was felt to be in some way indelicate for a candidate to take the field openly in his own behalf. It was a time of conferences at Ravenna and Cleveland and at Columbus with the State Central Committee. "I was very pleasantly received by those assembled," he commented in the journal, July 16. "This

was in striking contrast with their bearing toward me last year." The next day he was at Warren, furnishing material to Judge Kinsman to answer an attack by Jones. Garfield's correspondence shows that he and his agents canvassed all parts of the district and kept a sleepless watch on the similar doings of his enemies.

Here, for instance, is a letter (July 20) from Garfield to J. A. Howells, son of W. C. Howells, as an illustration of his methods. "From all the information I get, I don't see how the opposition are to get very large share of the delegates. Our friends in Trumbull County are confident that Jones cannot get a majority of that county. I think we shall have Portage, Geauga and Lake nearly solid. I have not much information about Ashtabula Co. Thorp reports the Northwestern part of the county as safe. It may be well for you to know that J. B. Phillips who is travelling over the eastern and southeastern part of the county working against me as hard as he can, came to Washington twice during the last session and urged me to give him the Orwell P.O. He was profuse in his declarations of friendship and boasted what he could do for me *if he got the office*. I refused to give it to him unless he could show me that the people wanted him. I think that we only need a few good men in each town to get a fair expression of sentiment in the primary meetings and that is all I want."

Garfield's journal follows the sequence of events day by day. On July 21, for instance, he writes: "Jones of Warren and his skirmishers are in the field busy with new forms of scandal against me. He was in Painesville yesterday and is in Chardon today." A week later, July 28: "Drove to Painesville. . . . Found that George Paine and Probate Judge Tuttle were making a raid upon me in regard to my services in the Chicago Pavement case. Invited friends to meet me at the parlor of the 'Stockwell House' where I stated the facts in the case and answered any questions they chose to ask. . . . In the evening attended the Garfield club (an organization of my friends lately formed) and responded for a short time to a complimentary address. Answered questions in reference to the salary act and apparently satisfied the

inquirers." On July 30 he went to Warren to consult with Austin and others. "The opposition against me in this place," he wrote, "is very bitter and very determined, but the best men in the town are my friends. The enemy has so long been at work against me that their influence has soaked down through the laboring class and produced much prejudice against me." On returning to his cottage the next day he wrote rather sadly in the journal: "How unlike my dreams this summer has been. I had hoped to spend a few months in Europe reviving my soul and reawakening my love of art and classic history. But after serving the country with all my strength, almost with my life, and achieving an honorable renown for the 19th District, I return to be nibbled and kicked at by a little-souled set of men who would besmirch one whom they cannot hope to overthrow. I make this last fight against them."

The contest culminated in the week before the election of delegates, August 3 to 8. A new opponent now entered the field, in the shape of Garfield's long-time friend and political confidant, D. W. Canfield of Chardon, who, after assuring Garfield of his friendship in an interview on July 27, allowed his name to be presented as a candidate a few days later. Garfield's comment in the journal showed only regret and pity at his weakness. "I think," he wrote, "that Canfield began as my friend, but becoming impressed with the belief that there was likely to be a successful raid upon me he thought best to place himself in a position where he could catch his share of the plunder. He has shown himself not the highest type of friend and has hurt himself."

In Painesville Garfield's principal assailants, Tuttle and Paine, tried an attack in a public meeting, but Garfield made no reply, although ready to come into the open if his friends thought it necessary. "The speeches of Paine and Tuttle," he recorded, "were very rambling and very bitter. They have overdone the business and have weakened their influence by their foolishness. . . . My friends concluded that their effort was too much a failure to require notice from me and so we let them wriggle. Still they will poison some minds." On August 6 Garfield thus summarized the situation: "The Dis-

trict is very thoroughly aroused and we shall have large primary meetings. My enemies are bitter and noisy, my friends more active than ever before and full of fight. To bring out so many candidates is a confession of weakness by the opposition, particularly of their leaders. They are puzzled at my silence and annoyed that I am not alarmed at their noise."

On the evening of August 8 he went to a telegraph office and listened to the reports until midnight. "Fifteen telegrams came from different points," he recorded, "showing that the primaries were very large and enthusiastic and that a very large majority of all the delegates elected are for me. Lake county solid; Geauga all but Chardon; Portage solid. Ashtabula and Trumbull gave me a majority." By Monday, the tenth, the victory was confirmed. "All concur," wrote Garfield, "that the primaries were much more largely attended than ever before in this District. Hodges came from Concord and gave me a full account of Judge Tuttle's attempt to get himself elected a delegate hostile to me. He made a speech and assailed me with great bitterness but he lost it by six majority. In Painesville where Tuttle and Paine had made so much noise there were 464 votes polled (only five less than Noyes' whole vote) and all but 62 were for me." On August 12 he adds: "The news from Portage county is especially gratifying. Scarcely an opposing vote appeared at any of the primary meetings. In many instances strong resolutions were passed in my favor."

The convention at Painesville on August 13 ratified the victory. The plan to break down Garfield by local nominations had failed. Jones secured seventeen delegates from Trumbull County; Northway fifteen from Ashtabula, Canfield two only, from Chardon, his "home town." At the convention the opposing elements voted blank ballots so Garfield was renominated by 100 to 34. The journal says: "I waited in the Stockwell House for the result and when I got before the convention I was prepared for peace or war according as the opposition behaved. . . . A committee called on me and I went to the convention and made a short address which I think was fairly successful. The convention was very en-

thusiastic and composed of as good men as ever met in a district convention here."

The first and most important battle for vindication had been won for Garfield by his devoted friends and political lieutenants. While the news of the voting at the primaries was coming in he wrote to Harmon Austin (August 10): "I have not now time to express the very deep and almost painful sense of gratitude I owe to you for the power of your friendship and the great wisdom and ability with which you have managed the contest. For more than a year you have carried me in your heart and thought almost hourly, as few men have carried a friend." He expressed himself in terms of almost equal thankfulness to Hall, Howells, Kinsman, Wing, Henry, Converse and a dozen more.

To Garfield and to his friends the outcome appeared like the complete overthrow of his assailants and the definite triumph of his good name against the charges of corruption, accomplished by a remarkable rally of the plain people to his defense. In his letter of August 10 to Austin, Garfield said: "In several of the towns which the enemy claimed as sure, they did not get one in ten votes at the primary meetings. Steele says there has never been such excitement and enthusiasm at a primary meeting in Painesville. Many old men on crutches who have not been at a primary meeting for 20 years came out and voted for me. In view of the returns thus far, I cannot but feel that the enemy will feel crushed nearly by the weight of public opinion." In his journal, August 11, he wrote: "The newspapers speak of the primaries as a matter of national importance. . . . My friends are very jubilant and say it is without doubt the greatest political victory of my life."

The battle was by no means over, for the election still remained to be fought. Garfield wrote as early as August 11: "There will be an ugly opposition at the polls. The foolish clamor against me in reference to the salary vote of March 3, 1873, made a deep impression on the popular mind and will not easily be erased." But the Democrats made no nomination for a month and meanwhile there was comparative calm. An attempt was made at Warren, on August 22, to

bring about harmony in the party. Garfield had delivered a lecture at the Trumbull County teachers' institute and spent the night at Judge Kinsman's. The next day, at two o'clock, "he invited a large party of gentlemen to dinner. The party was composed of both the friends and those who had been hostile to me in the primary meetings. . . . Yet Warren is still the headquarters of the opposition against me. Judge Glidden was there but did not seem cheerful. E. B. Taylor had more the appearance of cordiality than any of the leading opponents. . . . Senator Jones who was invited but did not come sulked on his porch across the street." He also resumed polite relations with Canfield and accepted his hospitality for a night, although it took "some self-control."

Garfield attended the Republican State Convention, as a delegate from Portage County and, in marked contrast to the situation in 1873, found himself welcomed with heartiness. His journal shows that he took an active part in organizing the convention and was chosen member of the Committee on Resolutions. "As a result of four hours work," he wrote, "the platform was agreed to. I wrote the financial resolutions which were received unanimously. This was no small triumph for me, who have for so many years stood alone against repudiation, inflation and the like."

Then followed a few days more resting. But on September 10 the political opposition crystallized into definite form. The Warren opponents, determined not to vote for Garfield under any circumstances, called an independent convention to meet simultaneously with the Democratic District Convention. Garfield wrote from Warren to his wife (September 11): "I find it necessary to go into the campaign at once and with vigor. A small squad of sore-headed anti-Garfield men met here yesterday and nominated a Methodist Preacher from Willoughby as candidate for Congress and last evening Judge Tuttle of Painesville made an exceedingly mean and bitter speech against me. The Democrats made a straight nomination in their convention yesterday and would not join in the bolting movement." There was, then, to be a three-cornered campaign. Evidently the outcome would depend upon the extent to which the third nomination should cut

into the regular Republican vote, for by a sufficiently deep inroad it might be possible to let in the Democratic candidate. This meant a savage personal contest and one in which Garfield could no longer let his political friends take sole charge, but must himself take the field.

There followed a month of the fiercest political fighting in Garfield's history. On September 12 he opened the campaign at Newton Falls. "I talked severely and without disguise of those who have assaulted and attempted to injure me with the people. I felt something of the spirit of battle in me and found that the response from my friends was ardent and enthusiastic." At Warren, the center of opposition, on September 19 he delivered a carefully prepared speech. "I spoke for two hours," he reported, "pausing at each point for my enemies to put in their questions. But few were asked and those few were answered promptly and conclusively. I let these gentlemen know that during this campaign it was to be blow for blow and those who struck must expect a blow in return. It was a painful kind of speech for me to make but I did it thoroughly to the satisfaction of my friends."

The speech was later reprinted in pamphlet form and widely circulated, as the best possible statement in Garfield's behalf covering all the attacks upon him in the district from the Milligan case of 1866 to the De Golyer pavement. Particularly noteworthy was Garfield's handling of the salary matter in connection with his remark in the *Congressional Globe* that he didn't acknowledge the salary amendment to be "plunder." With a boldness almost equal to that which he had shown at Warren ten years before, in 1864, he went on to say: "Now an attempt has been made to make it appear that Mr. Garfield approved the salary act because he answered this man that he didn't regard it as robbery. I answer, now, I do not regard it as robbery and never have. . . . I did not work against it because it was a theft or a robbery to put it on there; I worked against it because it was indecent, unbecoming and in the highest degree unwise to increase salaries at that time."

Then he stumped the district, his journal recording every stage in the campaign. His opponents challenged him to

debate but he refused. They might ask questions but he would not agree to share time with them in discussing his own personal fitness. "I do not propose to allow these fellows to get up meetings and take up half the time throwing mud at me." (September 15.)

His first impressions were encouraging. He felt that he was winning his audiences. But then came another tale. On September 28 an outside influence entered the campaign. The journal says, at Garrettsville, "Just before going in I received a copy of the *New York Sun extra* headed 'the Record of James A. Garfield' and containing twenty-eight columns." This attack, from the skillful pen of Charles A. Dana, was intended to cut the feet from under Garfield by massing together everything that could be asserted, conjectured or insinuated to his disadvantage, in such a way that rejoinder was excessively difficult. Considered as a campaign document it was a triumph of malice. Considered as a contribution to the biography of Garfield it is worth notice only for the revelation of Dana's mental and moral standards.

Garfield's only extended comment on the "*Sun extra*" was in a letter of October 5 to Richard Smith, editor of the *Cincinnati Gazette*, who had written (September 27) asking him to explain Dana's behavior. Garfield said in reply: "I have never known *certainly*, why Dana has assailed me so, but he has kept it up constantly for the last four years. There are two reasons that different persons have offered. One was that I struck Gould with severity in the Gold Panic report, and he and his newspaper was supposed to have been hired by Gould to aid in the conspiracy. The other was that soon after he commenced his venomous course in the *Sun*, I said to a friend that it was a pity that Dana had sold his claims to the respect of all his friends for the money he could make by editing a vile paper. His friend was expostulating with Dana on his quarrelsomeness and repeated what I had said. He replied that he would make Garfield smart for it. . . . I do know that he has a present motive, for he has a brother living in Warren, who left the Republican party a few years ago, mainly because I did not make him a register

in bankruptcy, and *he* has been raving against me ever since. He is now a bitter Democrat, and the Warren people say a thousand dollars was raised in Trumbull county for the Extra Sun which assails me with such malignant falsehood."

In this campaign the principal charges against Garfield were the "salary grab" and the "De Golyer Pavement." The *Crédit Mobilier* was occasionally alluded to, but it played a small part beside the other two. It was not contended that in these two affairs Garfield had actually stolen money, but that he had indicated his total moral unfitness by mendacity, shiftiness and a willingness to use his official position to get pickings. Garfield found himself compelled to pay particular attention to that part of the De Golyer charge which he had contemptuously ignored at first, the accusation that he used his place as chairman of the Committee on Appropriations with power to give or withhold money for the District when he appeared in Parsons's place before the District Board of Public Works. Once more it was necessary to explain to his constituents the exact nature of the situation in the District in 1872 which made such a charge preposterous. There was then a territorial form of government for Washington and the District, with a Governor and legislature, and it was this government, not Congress, which levied taxes and borrowed money and made appropriations. "I was chairman of the Committee on Appropriations you say, and the House of Representatives appropriated money for the District of Columbia. How? Whenever a pavement on any given street is laid . . . the Government of the United States, as a mere matter of decent justice, paid its proper proportion in front of its own buildings as any other property holder would do and that is all. . . . The appropriations for the District of Columbia were made before I touched or had anything to do with the matter. It is true that the next year there were appropriations made for the District of Columbia but . . . Congress knew no more about the De Golyer pavement or any other pavement than you in Warren did. It simply made the appropriation to pay for paving in front of its own buildings if it thought proper to do so and that is all."¹

¹ Speech of September 19, 1874, at Warren.

In this contest Garfield felt none of that joy of battle which swayed him in many a hard-fought campaign. In defending his own character and debating his own record he found nothing but depressing, repugnant work. He fought steadily, but without enthusiasm. A letter to his wife, in the midst of the campaign, gives a picture of his mood (October 1): "I have had a hard two days work since I left you. A cold ride of eleven miles from Baconsburg, a two hours speech at Gustavus—yesterday morning in the rain, an ugly wagon ride of 17 miles—a speech at Andover—and then a colder wagon ride of 16 miles to this place and a speech of two hours among enemies, in reply to an ugly two hours attack made here the night before by Judge Tuttle of Painesville and a cold cheerless night at the hotel. This brings me to morning and near to the train time to go to Conneaut to speak again among enemies. Nearly a ton of copies of the *N. Y. Sun* has been brought into the District and are being peddled through all the townships. This is politics as I find it this fall. You can imagine how cheerless and thankless a task I have on hand. The hope of seeing you, after three more speeches is the one bright spot in the prospect of the week. After speaking at Conneaut this evening I must sit up till 2 o'clock to take the train for Norwalk."

Everywhere that Garfield went he met people circulating the "*Sun extra*," trying to poison the minds of the voters. At Andover and at Jefferson his late competitor, Northway, spoke with him from the same platform, but the Andover meeting "was about as dreary and cheerless a days meeting as I have ever had" and "for the first time in my life I felt a chill come up from a Jefferson audience." At the same time he learned that his friend Thorpe, with more gallantry than wisdom, had challenged Tuttle to a debate at Painesville and had been overpowered by his bitter and reckless opponent. This lent special intensity to Garfield's own appearance in Painesville, which took place October 6. Garfield's description of this occasion deserves to be given in full.

"At two oclock went to the Opera House which was densely packed. Mr. Perkins, a venerable gentleman, presided and I spoke for an hour and a half on public questions, more satis-

factorily than I have yet spoken during the campaign. I then turned to the personal issues that have been made upon me and discussed them thoroughly for three-quarters of an hour. I felt that I had the audience in my hands. Then I challenged my enemies to propound questions. Judge Tuttle rose, backed and seconded by J. B. Burrows and propounded a series of questions. I answered him promptly and each answer brought forth a storm of applause. He persisted in repeating the same questions and I finally opened up on him with a furious attack which everybody seemed to feel was crushing. The meeting lasted three hours and broke up with tremendous cheers. I believe I have broken the back of the opposition in Painesville and that Judge Tuttle's career is substantially ended." To his wife he wrote of this encounter: "The meeting was one of the best I have ever had. Tuttle and his crew were there and ventured to question me. I doubt if he knew when I left him whether he was hash or jelly. My darling, had you been there I think you would not have been ashamed of your husband." A week later from Painesville he wrote to his wife, "The echoes of my meeting here are still ringing and my friends think I surpassed myself." This was one of the few times in Garfield's whole career when he engaged in personal invective on the stump, and the results seemed in this case to be salutary.

Garfield had another meeting with his principal assailant which he described as follows: "After writing you yesterday at Chardon," he told his wife (October 8), "I drove twelve miles to Thompson where was a great Fair and Judge Tuttle mounted on a wagon howling to such as would hear him against me. I treated him with the scorn of silence and he raved on alone."

The rest of the campaigning went well, according to Garfield's judgment. His journal records favorable impressions from speeches all over the district. His last important address was at Warren, on October 10. On this occasion he had the valuable assistance of Senator Sherman, who, in response to Garfield's request,¹ "made a very handsome mention of my personal character and public services. At the close of his

¹ *John Sherman's Recollections*, Vol. I, p. 479.

speech," continued Garfield's record, "I spoke about three quarters of an hour devoting about two thirds of the time to general topics and the last third to a condensed and scornful notice of those republican enemies who were peddling the *New York Sun*. I think I have never struck a more effective blow at the enemy than in the last fifteen minutes of this speech."

On the election day Garfield predicted the outcome as follows: "I estimate that Hurlburt will receive about two thousand Republican votes. Some democrats may vote for him, in which case his vote will be larger. I tell my friends that I shall be satisfied with six thousand majority over the Democratic ticket." The outcome showed that he underestimated slightly the strength of the bolt.

	Garfield	Hurlburt	Wood
Ashtabula	3,478	1,273	755
Geauga	1,798	645	284
Lake	1,925	551	634
Portage	2,543	222	2,340
Trumbull	2,847	736	2,232
	12,591	3,427	6,245

In studying the figures above given it is to be observed that this was a year of violent anti-Republican reaction throughout the North, a veritable "tidal wave." If Garfield's vote shrank from 19,189 in 1872 to 12,591 in 1874, part of this decline was due to the general situation. The shrinkage in the Republican majorities in other districts in Ohio where there was no such personal issue at stake, while not as marked, was sufficient to cause the loss of five seats.

On November 3 the rest of the Congressional elections more than fulfilled the gloomy forebodings of October. Writing to his Democratic friend, H. B. Payne, who had been elected in the Cleveland district, he said (November 6), "We who thought the 13th October was stormy have seen that that day was only a shower in comparison with the deluge of last Tuesday." To J. H. Paine of Painesville he wrote the same day: "The cyclone that swept over the Republican

party on Tuesday last makes our Ohio campaign respectable and covers my fight in the Nineteenth District with glory. I do not want to profit by the contrast but the contrast exists nevertheless."

The size and distribution of the Hurlburt vote shows the utmost that Garfield's enemies could accomplish by a campaign of over a year directed against his personal character, supplemented by the skillful journalistic malice of the *New York Sun*. To a large degree the explosion of 1874 represented a long-considered and frequently threatened outbreak against Garfield in his own party. Twice before this third tickets had been considered, in 1868 and in 1870, and repeated campaigns had been made to defeat him for the nomination. In each case the starting-point had been in the city of Warren, from which the intrigues and negotiations had radiated into the other counties. In 1868 the opposition had mustered twenty-eight votes in the convention, which was only six less than they numbered in 1874. In a sense there was nothing new in the attack, except the fact that the salary excitement of 1873, coupled with the general depression, emboldened the Warren leaders to carry to a final issue the opposition they had been threatening, strengthened, doubtless, by the activity of the Painesville group, who had only entered the district in 1872.

The judgment of J. F. Rhodes in his history is to a great extent true.¹ "It is indisputable that he won his case before very intelligent juries. His district was celebrated . . . for its intelligent and high-minded people; it was made up of inquisitive and reflecting voters. To these he argued his case and received a vindication." The Warren and Painesville enemies challenged before the voters of the people the personal honesty of their representative, and over 80 per cent of the Republicans who voted reaffirmed their faith in his integrity. It is to be observed, however, that Rhodes is in error in laying so much emphasis on the *Crédit Mobilier* affair, for that charge was not often mentioned in the campaign. The chief fighting ground was the salary vote and the De Golyer pavement matter.

¹ *History of the United States*, Vol. VIII, p. 17.

To Garfield the result was wholly satisfactory. In a letter to his wife written from Cleveland October 13, when the news of his success was certain he said, "Before this you have read of our great victory and you know how sincerely I am rejoicing at the triumph of truth over error." That is about the only comment found on his part, beyond an analysis of the way the votes were cast. When his vindication was complete he dropped the subject from his words and thoughts and plunged back into reading and resting. He wrote to Professor Demmon (October 19) in answer to a congratulatory letter: "In view of the general deluge that has swept over the party, and in view of the bitter and malignant assaults made upon me I feel that I came out better than could have been expected. I am resting and reading Goethe's biography and letting the calm of his great life fall into my own."

One is tempted to pause to consider the causes and the significance of this campaign. From reading the speeches and letters and editorials of Garfield's assailants, it is clear that the grievance of the opposition did not lie in Garfield's political views on the currency or the tariff, but solely in his personality. Garfield himself was utterly unable to account for the extreme animosity of such men as Judge Tuttle and Senator Jones. He had never done them an injury or come into conflict with them, and when confronted with evidence of their implacable antagonism and readiness to accuse him, on any or no evidence, of all sorts of dishonesty and meanness he could only fall back on something native in them. "The blank 34 votes at the Painesville Convention," he wrote, "probably represent the sourness and envy, together with the salary indignation of this District. There is a touch of Yankee narrowness in the people of this District, which I do not at all admire, and which seems inconsistent with their general intelligence." It is, perhaps, impossible to draw any other conclusion. Certainly there are always dozens if not hundreds of people in any community who find it easy to suspect the virtue or morality of any public man, and who are capable of working themselves into an honest belief in his corruption and hypocrisy, a belief incapable of alteration by any proof or argument. Such it was Garfield's fate to incur.

CHAPTER XVI
BETWEEN LAW AND PUBLIC LIFE
1875-1876

THE victory in the election of 1874 was felt by Garfield to mark a turning-point in his life, since he could now honorably carry out an idea which had been in his mind for several years but had been deferred, perforce, until he should have defeated his political enemies in his district. This was the plan of leaving Congress and turning to the law. In his first letter to his wife after the election he said (October 13): "I look forward with pleasure at the prospect of relief from the burdens of public life. . . . I want you to know that I have carried out fully the programme I proposed last year. 1st to defeat my enemies (which was done last fall) and 2nd To demonstrate to them that I can do it again (which I have done this fall.) It now remains to show people that I can lay down an important office for the sake of myself and my family." In his annual New Year's letter to Hinsdale he reiterated the same thing firmly (January 4): "It is now my purpose to quit public life, at least for a time, at the close of my next term but I dont wish my enemies to know of this intention. I may change this view but I hope not. I want to feel free once again to do some work for myself. Fifteen years ago today I took the oath of Office as State Senator and I have not been an hour out of the public service since then."

With the ending of the Forty-third Congress Garfield felt that he was now free to make the transfer to the law in whatever way was most convenient and advantageous. But first he meant to have a period of resting. "It is a sort of transition stage of my affairs," he wrote to Hinsdale (April 12), "and I hope to gain time for a calm review of my own surroundings."

Anyone who could have had the opportunity of looking

over Garfield's journal and letters during the month after the close of the session, even while he was making the plans just quoted, might well have doubted whether his keen interest in politics would ever permit him actually to retire. He took part in the Connecticut state campaign and found refreshment in it. "It brings back some of my old force and enthusiasm," he wrote to his wife (March 31), "to speak where there is not a crowd of men carping at me for personal reasons of malignity and selfishness. It helps to reassure me and make me feel I have not lost my power over men." He took an active though futile part in trying to get his friend, Pardee, approved by the Senate as Federal Judge in Louisiana, against the opposition of West, the carpet-bag Senator from that state.

Over West's claim to dictate such appointments, the so-called "Senatorial courtesy," Garfield freely expressed his indignation. "I know of no custom more vicious," he wrote, "or more damaging to the theory and practice of good government than that which has sprung up of late years in the Senate, by which the administration senators of a state are allowed to be sole judges of the appointments in their own state. . . . It is on this principle that Senator West, a man of very meagre abilities and of doubtful character, has been able thus far to resist the confirmation of a most worthy officer. The President ought to make an open contest with the Senate on this subject." He little dreamed that precisely six years later he would convulse the politics of the United States by carrying out the policy here suggested.

At the same time he found himself a close spectator of the contest for the succession to Grant, which was already taking form in the appearance of a number of "booms" for rival candidates. The most striking feature, and in view of the part it ultimately played in Garfield's own career the most important, was the fact that a considerable body of Grant's especial friends and intimates were boldly advocating that he be renominated for a third term, as the only man capable of holding the country together in the face of the rising Southern reaction. Garfield noted this movement in a letter of March 15. "It begins to be a settled impression

here," he said, "that Grant is really making efforts for a third term and that a crowd of people around him are determined that everything shall be bent for that purpose." His next step was to suggest the setting of a backfire in Ohio. Writing to J. Q. Smith (April 16) he said: "We must throw off the third term nightmare before we can have any party success. The President declines to disclaim his candidacy. . . . There is but one course left for us in Ohio. We must in plain and unmistakeable words for ourselves repudiate the doctrine of a third term. In the next place we must put forward an unexceptionable man for governor. I think we ought to take Hayes." Thus he assisted in pushing forward a "favorite son" who was ultimately to gain the nomination coveted by Grant.

Simultaneously two other prospective candidates opened up the subject with him. First, Bristow, the "reform" Secretary of the Treasury, discussed the situation. "He says," recorded the journal (March 9 and 16), "he has been reluctantly compelled to come to the conclusion that the President is really meditating a third term. He gave me a sombre picture of the elements as represented in the surroundings of the White House." Bristow felt that Grant's especial henchmen were determined to force him out of the cabinet, but Garfield urged him not to resign. "I told Bristow," he added (March 16), "that while I was a strong friend of Blaine, I thought it not unlikely that the geography of the case would turn the presidential contest of 1876 in his direction. Either of these men would make a good president."

On March 28 he had a similar conversation with Blaine. "In the afternoon," he records in the journal, "Mr. Blaine sent for me and I went to his house and had a long visit. . . . Blaine has fully committed himself to the candidacy and is studying the forces and elements of the problem very carefully. As a shrewd observer of events, he has few equals in the country; as a judge of men he is equally sagacious. There are many elements in his favor but there are also some drawbacks. Among them is his location, which may be objectionable to the West; and I think there may be a feeling that he is too much inclined to management, perhaps to intrigue."

In another place in his journal (March 16) he made this comment: "The worst danger Blaine has to contend with is the fact that he is so widely known as an active candidate for the place. But few men in our history have ever obtained the Presidency, by planning to obtain it. In most cases it is got as the result, partly of accident, and partly of the popular sentiment seizing hold of a man who has not done much about it himself."

In a letter of April 12 to Hinsdale, after repeating his belief that any attempt by Grant to capture a third term would kill the party—"the people will not tolerate the idea"—he commented on the status of Grant's cabinet, repeating very likely what he had learned from Bristow. "I think Grant has done more than all his predecessors to let down and degrade the position of cabinet officer. It has come to be understood that a man is chosen . . . because he is a special friend of the president rather than because he is a strong representative man. . . . Bristow, Fish and Jewell are about all of the present cabinet that show any personal manliness. The rest seem so happy over their elevation that their chief anxiety is to retain their places."

The man who wrote the foregoing keen comments was not turning his back sharply on politics; far the contrary. Yet there is no reason to doubt the sincerity of Garfield's intention at the time to go into the law, even while, with his customary inability to be off with the old love, he was showing his undiminished interest in things political. On April 17, however, he went on a trip to California which lasted until June 15, and on his return he suffered from a severe recurrence of his old digestive troubles which kept him in bed until relieved by an operation. It was the middle of August before he was able to take any positive steps either toward law or toward politics, but his letters showed the constant interest he took in all the moves on the party checkerboard and his own eagerness to get into the autumn campaign.

When the Ohio Republican Convention nominated ex-Governor Hayes, whom he had suggested in March, he was well content. June 24 he wrote to him: "I hope you will take the helm yourself in regard to planning the campaign and

put in speakers where they can serve most efficiently. I tender you not only my hearty support but all the work I can do at any place you may desire it. Let me suggest that we will gain far more than we can lose . . . by pressing our views of finance boldly and aggressively as against the wretched and dishonest scheme of the Democracy. We have a few soft money men who will be hurt by it but we shall gain far more than our loss on that score. I think now is the time for us to cripple the Democracy for next year. Even if they should win this campaign it will hopelessly cripple them for next year's Presidential campaign. But I do not believe the Democrats can beat us."¹ Hayes heartily agreed with this plan and the Republicans went into the campaign on an issue that stirred Garfield's whole-hearted enthusiasm.

From his sick bed he wrote in his journal, July 15, showing how the chance to debate against inflation stirred him like the sound of a battle trumpet. "I have read the crazy speech of Judge Kelley at Youngstown and long to get on my feet to answer him," and he wrote that same day, accepting an invitation to open the campaign July 31, a project he was quite unable to carry out. July 27 he wrote: "To-day I have done some reading on the topics of the Ohio campaign but my mind had not yet recovered its grip. . . . I long to take the field against the . . . fanatical demagogues who are preaching a paper money crusade."

The moment he was able to walk without staggering he left his Little Mountain cottage and plunged into the campaign with all the zest of delayed battle. His formal opening speech was on August 31, at Warren, the scene of his savage personal contest two years before. His journal says: "I felt a sense of mastery of my audience (which was very large and attentive) and there was in the atmosphere a much more friendly spirit than that which I felt here last fall." Garfield continued his speaking until October 11, the day before the election. The upshot was the triumph of Hayes by a very small majority, but enough to give him thorough satisfaction.

¹ Williams, *Life of R. B. Hayes*, Vol. I, p. 390.

Hayes (Republican)	Allen (Democrat)	Senate	House
297,817	292,273	20-17	65-46

What pleased him the most was that in this campaign party and candidate were solidly lined up against inflation. "I stood alone for so many years among our Ohio congressmen in favor of hard money," he wrote to Professor Perry (November 3), "that it was very gratifying to me to find at last so many co-workers. I believe the people were more instructed by that campaign than by any we have had for years. . . . It was the best doctrinal discussion we have had on the stump."

At the same time, however, that he was playing the game of campaigning, he was taking steady steps toward carrying out his plans to enter a law firm and establish a home in Cleveland. On August 6 he wrote in the journal: "The question of quitting public life and building a home for my little ones is fast pressing upon me for decision." Then came the following significant words, "I shrink from starting out into a new career but it must be done." After the campaign he brought the matter close to a final solution, by looking at house lots, discussing terms for building and practically agreeing to join the law firm of Burke and Estep. Yet the agreement "had a string to it." "We informally agreed," he wrote, "to form a partnership, not to be announced until April 1, when definite terms should be agreed upon. This settles it as far as can now be done and yet leaves both free."

To J. Q. Smith (October 30) he gave further details of his plans. "I now expect to serve this session through and resign in time to let my successor be elected for the short term at the next annual election. Still I am not so finally committed that I cannot draw back if it should seem best." He was not ready yet to take the plunge, and in postponing the decision to April he still doubted its finality, in spite of all his arguments. After a few short visits he took his family back to Washington, recording in his journal (October 20): "In a few minutes the train had swept me out of my district. The day was very beautiful and so I left . . . my District,

smiling a sweet and yet I fancied a sad goodbye, to me on what is probably my last departure from Portage county as its representative."

Nowhere is the inner conflict more marked than in the letters he wrote to Austin, in these days. For example, on November 3, 1875, from Washington, he recapitulated the reasons for going into the law, both negative and positive. But in giving reasons for preferring to set up practice in Cleveland rather than in Washington, he remarked, "I may some time want to re-enter public life," and at the end of the letter he added: "On many accounts I should be glad to continue in public life, I am regarded as the leader of the sound currency doctrine and shall be glad to help make it triumphant. Furthermore if the Republicans carry the next Presidency, it is very likely that any position I might desire would be open to me in the administration."

The fact was, Garfield saw both sides and all the arguments on each side, and recognized the force of all that could be said for and against leaving Congress. As in 1860-1861, when teaching and the law were balancing before him and decision seemed impossible, so now he could bring himself to the very verge of action, but did not actually make the break. Ultimately in this as in the earlier case, outside forces stepped in to make the decision for him.

The session of Congress which began in December, 1875, was the first one for sixteen years in which the Democratic party had controlled the House, and the Republicans had to adapt themselves to a wholly unfamiliar rôle, that of minority tactics. Garfield looked around upon a body of men from whom most of his earlier associates had disappeared. Maynard of Tennessee and Orth of Indiana were no longer members, and Dawes had gone to the Senate, which would have left him the oldest in continuous service had not N. P. Banks reappeared.

On the Democratic side, the older minority gladiators, S. S. Cox and Wood, were still there and Holman and Kerr of Indiana; but Niblack, with whom Garfield's associations had been so agreeable on the Appropriation Committee, was missing, and also Beck, his old assailant. Newcomers of a

more distinctly western type were W. M. Springer and W. R. Morrison of Illinois. Perhaps the most conspicuous absentee was Butler, whose partisan violence would no longer lash the House into fury, and whose unfailing championship of every measure or proposal that offended Garfield's sense of honesty or justice would no longer force the latter into wearisome parliamentary wrangles.

An interesting addition to the Democratic ranks, from Garfield's point of view, was J. Randolph Tucker, who represented a type that he had thought extinct, namely, an old-fashioned, strict-constructionist, states' rights logician. His combination of narrowness of political creed with great mental dexterity fascinated Garfield, and his personal charm—that of the old-time Virginia patrician—completely won his liking, although the two men differed as widely as the poles in all things governmental and partisan. Another whom he enjoyed was R. Gibson of Louisiana, typically Southern in his record—he had fought against Garfield at Chickamauga—and a dashing and able Congressman from the start.

Under these conditions it fell to the lot of the Democrats to undertake to govern when not one of their number had had any real training in committee responsibilities. Men like Cox, Holman and Wood were highly skillful in criticism, but they had yet to learn how to frame and carry constructive legislation. They elected M. J. Kerr of Indiana as Speaker, while the Republicans cast a complimentary vote for Blaine. At the heads of committees Garfield saw his old opponents. Morrison of Illinois and Wood of New York were on the Ways and Means; Randall and Holman were now heading the Appropriations; H. B. Banning, a vociferous ex-officer from Ohio, headed the Military Committee; S. S. Cox took charge of the Committee on Banking. Knott, once more in the House after an interval, headed the Committee on the Judiciary.

To Garfield's experienced eye this list seemed very weak. He wrote to Austin (December 22): "The committees announced on Monday have taken everybody by surprise. I do not think there has been so weak a lot of chairmen in 40

years. Out of 34 of the most important committees, the late Slave States have 21 chairmen and New England none. They left me off the Appropriations Committee avowedly on the ground that my thorough knowledge of the matter would be an embarrassment to the chairman. In some respects I am better pleased with the change, for it will give me less work and I shall have more time to engage in a free fight on the floor." This prediction proved strictly true, and the "free fight" was not slow in presenting itself.

The committee on which Garfield found himself was, by the irony of fate, the very one toward which his aspirations had always pointed, the Committee of Ways and Means. As minority member, he might, if he chose, seek to coöperate with the Democratic majority, but only at the risk of alienating the members of his own party. Practically he was powerless to affect legislation in committee. On the floor of the House he could of course criticise, make antagonistic motions, offer amendments and seek either to improve a pending bill or, failing that, to discredit it, but in so doing he was always assailing a superior force.

It is interesting to find that when Garfield began this Congress even his friend Hinsdale doubted whether he was sufficiently combative to shine as a minority member. He wrote (January 4): "The other day I heard a thoughtful young man make the suggestion in regard to you that you would be a less important character in this than in the late Houses. He said Republicans could be active now only in debate and that your skin was too thin for such encounters. He meant you were lacking in the *gaudia certaminis*, in a certain kind of 'carnage.' In these particulars he thought Blaine so much your superior that he would all the while keep ahead of you. . . . Had you thought of this? Had it ever occurred to you that you and I both would be more 'effective' if we were of coarser make?" Garfield's comment on this suggestion is characteristic (January 7): "What your young friend said of me as a member of the minority is very interesting. I have thought on the same subject. He may be right." Both Garfield's modesty and Hinsdale's judgment were soon to be proved utterly at fault.

So far as Garfield's share in the legislation of the session is concerned, it may be dealt with briefly, for under the circumstances, with President and Senate of one party, House of another, important legislation was almost out of the question except on some matter that cut across party lines. There was one such question, it is true, that of the currency, but since it did not come up until the very end of the session, its consideration may be postponed. From Garfield's committee, that of Ways and Means, no business of any importance was brought forward. Some Democrats thought the time opportune to try a tariff measure but failed to push the matter. Garfield gave an account in his journal of March 16: "Met with the Committee on Ways and Means and after a lengthy debate it was determined to take up Morrison's tariff bill. I proposed that we frame a bill putting the tax on tea and coffee and removing some smaller vexatious taxes, making a reduction about half as much as the increase made by tea and coffee. But I voted against taking up the whole subject of the tariff at this late hour of the session. By nearly a strict party vote, however, it was agreed to take up the bill." On March 21 he reports: "We began work on Morrison's tariff, an extreme measure, which though it has some good points in it, cannot become law this session and I cannot therefore feel the interest in it I otherwise would. I should prefer a policy about midway the doctrine of the two parties, with a slow progress toward the Democratic view. We passed on the first 22 lines of the bill."

The journal shows that Garfield would have been strongly inclined to support a tariff reform bill if he could do so without damaging his party standing, but was prevented from so doing by the strictly partisan methods of the majority. "The Democrats," he wrote to Dr. Robison (April 11), "are determined if possible to break up the present tariff, but I think we shall be able to beat them when they get it reported to the House. The trouble with our good friend Payne has been that he has tried to do everything through the Democratic caucus, instead of offering a financial measure in the House so as to have the sound men of both parties unite on it." The bill was reported and debated

in May, but by that time the shadows of the presidential election had so spread as to obscure everything else, and it was never brought to a final vote.

Toward his old critic, Holman, now chairman of the Committee on Appropriations, Garfield showed a kindly readiness to cooperate in keeping down expenses, but he protested against some proposals as short-sighted. In the debate on the Diplomatic and Consular Appropriation Bill, for instance, on February 7 he made a speech of some length, assailing a Democratic proposal to reduce to a minimum or actually to abolish the diplomatic and consular offices in South America and in the Orient, on the ground that "there is no part of the world where the United States has so much right and so great duty to be chief in the councils of international powers as in South America on the one side, and Japan and China on the other. . . . We allow Great Britain, if this bill is to pass, to spend more than three times as much for the same kind of service to the same governments. Will we wonder, if this thing is done, that Great Britain gets the control of these countries away from us? . . . I would rather blot out five or six European missions than these to South America. They are our neighbors and republican friends. . . . As for China and Japan the proposed reduction would leave Great Britain in undisputed control. Gentlemen," he urged, "I beg of you, do not cripple and utterly ruin this young and growing commerce that shall bind Asia to the United States."¹

The importance that Garfield attached to the part to be played by the United States in the future control of the Pacific was again illustrated when, on April 6, a bill to carry into execution the Hawaiian reciprocity treaty came up for action. "Remembering that it is clear that this group of islands must seek an alliance, if not with us, then with our rivals," he said, "I cannot conceive that the grounds upon which gentlemen base their opposition to this treaty can overcome the reasons in its favor. . . . If we do not make this treaty, schemes of annexation will vex us from year to year until we shall be compelled to annex these islands as a

¹ *Cong. Record*, 44 Cong., 1 sess., pp. 926-981.

matter of self-protection." Once more he disclaimed any desire for expansion, as such,—“I trust we have seen the last of our annexation,”—but he felt that the future importance of the Pacific and the necessity of controlling the Hawaiian Islands as a stepping-stone to China made the treaty ratification imperative.¹

Such debating was in the line of Garfield's earlier experience, but what occupied the focus of interest in this session was not so much legislation as manœuvring with reference to party position in the coming election. The Democrats led off by bringing up a resolution denouncing the third term movement, which passed without debate, December 15. It declared that “any departure from this time honored custom would be unwise, unpatriotic and fraught with peril to our free institutions.”² Garfield voted with the majority. Their next step was to start a series of investigations with the evident expectation of discovering irregularities and scandals which would damage the Republican administration. On January 10, however, Blaine, for the Republicans, took the offensive by interjecting into a debate on an amnesty bill a severe personal attack on Jeff Davis, demanding that he be excluded from amnesty on the ground that he was responsible for the sufferings of the Northern prisoners of war at Andersonville and elsewhere. His apparent purpose in this was to revive sectional feeling, and more especially to goad the “southern brigadiers” into language that should disclose their secessionist sympathies. In this he was thoroughly successful, evoking from Hill of Georgia a hot-tempered reply that was filled with “Confederate loyalty.

At this point Garfield entered the game and on January 12 spoke in reply to Hill. The journal account says: “Wed. 12 worked up the facts which connect the atrocities of Andersonville with Jeff. Davis and went to the House at twelve. A number of telegrams came to me making suggestions on the debate. The call of the states for bills occupied an hour and a half, and this gave me time to work in my new facts and to recast the plan of my speech. There was so much pas-

¹ *Cong. Record*, 44 Cong., 1 sess., pp. 2273-2274.

² *Ibid.*, p. 228.

sion in the House that I determined first of all to keep my temper and not allow myself to be diverted from my purpose, to wit, firstly to deal with the utmost firmness asserting the truth of our history against the calumnies of Mr. Hill. I commenced my speech at two o'clock and continued for an hour and forty-five minutes my time being extended on a motion from the other side. Considering the short time I had to prepare it, I believe the speech was one of the most successful I have ever delivered. Certainly its effect seemed to be more marked than any."

To some extent this speech was in support of Blaine, for Garfield took considerable pains to present the testimony, chiefly from Wirtz's trial, which indicated that Davis had taken no steps to ameliorate the condition of the prisoners, even when requested to do so by the officers in charge. But in one respect Garfield differed widely by avoiding what he considered Blaine's mistake in showing anger. "I determined," he wrote to Austin (January 16), "to keep my temper perfectly under control and to do two things. First show a kind and magnanimous spirit toward the South and second to crush the speech of Hill. . . . Blaine made a very powerful speech but lost his temper and some reputation. Nearly all the Democrats admit that my speech was fair and in good temper." A few extracts will illustrate this feature of his speech.¹ "Mr. Speaker," he began, "no gentleman on this floor can regret more sincerely than I do the course that the debate has taken. . . . Let me say in the outset, that so far as I am personally concerned, I have never voted against any proposition to grant amnesty to any human being who has asked for it at the bar of this House. Furthermore I appeal to gentlemen on the other side of me in this hall many years whether at any time they have found me truculent in spirit, unkind in tone or feeling toward those who fought against us in the late war."

At one place in the speech, when his use of the word "perjury" to describe the conduct of the men who broke their oaths to the Constitution to join the Confederacy called forth loud protests from believers in states' rights, he even

¹ *Works of James A. Garfield*, Vol. II, p. 219.

said, "I admit that that theory greatly mitigates all that the law speaks of as a violation of an oath." He ended: "And now, Mr. Speaker, I close as I began. Towards those men who gallantly fought us on the field of battle I cherish the kindest feeling. I feel a sincere reverence for the soldierly qualities which they displayed on many a well-fought battlefield. . . . The high qualities displayed in that conflict now belong to the whole nation. Let them be consecrated to the Union and its future peace and glory."¹

The next day the debate was concluded, Blaine speaking again "in a speech full of strong and brilliant points, but he failed," commented Garfield, "in maintaining the equanimity of his temper and I think lost something by being aggressively personal. . . . On the whole," he concluded, "the debate has done great good in arousing the people to [the] real spirit of the South and I doubt if any speech I have ever delivered has been so widely and so strongly praised."

In this speech Garfield consciously or unconsciously assumed a new function—that of spokesman for the Republican party minority in the House on a purely party matter. This was something he had never before done nor wished to do. He had made political speeches before, but only for his own "record," and for the most part his whole aim had been to push or to defeat legislation. On this occasion his motive was entirely political and in a sense partisan. In answer to a letter of congratulations from his old teacher, Mark Hopkins, he explained his intentions as follows (February 5, 1876): "The speech of Mr. Blaine drew a very strong and truthful picture of the sufferings of our prisoners at Andersonville, but he did not clearly prove the responsibility of Jefferson Davis for the outrages on our soldiers. I undertook to supply this defect. I had no intention of doing it until Mr. Hill commenced his speech. When we reflect upon the fact that he has been upbraided by many leaders in the South for the mildness of his speech we can understand something of the hate that still fills the hearts of that people."

But the irony of the situation did not escape Garfield.

¹ *Cong. Record*, 44 Cong., 1 sess., pp. 382-389.

"For four years," he observed to Hinsdale (January 18), "I have been working on appropriations doing a very large amount of important and valuable work. . . . The other [day] I replied to Hill in a speech on which I laid out only four or five hours work yet if I am to judge from the responses which came to me in more than one hundred letters since its delivery and from the opinions of the people around me I have made more reputation and directed the attention of the country to myself more than in all the financial work I have done. Now of course I regard my financial work as better intellectual work than this."

In the preliminary discussions of candidates and the manœuvring for delegates that preceded the Republican convention, Garfield occupied a detached and rather a peculiar position. On the whole, he hoped for Blaine's success. That he did so can be ascribed only to his yielding to the attraction of Blaine's personality, for throughout his letters and diaries there constantly cropped up a dislike of Blaine's tendency toward intrigue and a distrust of his complete reliability. As has been shown, he distinctly felt that Blaine had played him false in 1871 and came near doing it in 1873. Yet in spite of this Garfield was at first moderately and at the end warmly in favor of his nomination. At the same time, Garfield was under bonds of political wisdom and party custom to support the candidate favored by the Ohio state organization, and this, he knew, was not ready to vote for Blaine. He exerted himself, accordingly, to induce the Ohio delegates to unite on Governor Hayes as a "favorite son," and to be ready, ultimately, to transfer their votes to Blaine. He wrote a number of letters to this purport.

On January 24, for instance, he wrote to Austin: "It now seems as though Hayes will get the vote of Ohio, but I do not believe he can be nominated. If we give him our vote, we ought to elect delegates with a view to concentrate a second choice upon some other man—say Blaine. Ohio has wasted her strength at several of the presidential nominations by being divided. It now looks as though there was danger of having Morton for a candidate. I think his nomination would endanger the success of the party. He is totally unfit, both

morally and politically to be our candidate." In March he said much the same thing to Hayes himself.¹ "I am greatly gratified at the way you are bearing yourself during these preliminary months of platform and president making. I have believed from the beginning that . . . we should give you the solid vote of the Ohio delegation and await the break which must come as the weaker candidates drop out."

On March 2 there occurred an appalling event, which for the moment seemed to Garfield to render a Democratic victory inevitable. Secretary of War Belknap was discovered by a committee of the House to have been corruptly taking money, through his wife, for appointments to Indian post traderships, and was unanimously impeached by the House. But, as though to protect him from any attack, Grant on the same day accepted his resignation, which operated to remove him from the jurisdiction of the Senate. As it happened, Garfield got from Grant's own lips an account of this very questionable action on his part which impressed him so much that he wrote it out in detail in the journal. Though long, it is worth quoting in full.

"The president gave me a minute account of his part in the Belknap resignation. He had not heard a word of the case until he was at breakfast when Bristow called. The day before he had promised to give Ulke, the artist, a sitting for a portrait . . . so he brought his coat and hat downstairs when he came to breakfast. After Bristow's call he ordered a note sent to Mr. Bass [Republican member of the committee which moved the impeachment] asking that gentleman to call at twelve. Having finished breakfast he started to go out, when he was met at the door by Belknap and Chandler. The former was nearly suffocated with excitement, made an incoherent explanation and offered his resignation. The President, still bent on going to the artist's, did not go upstairs, but sent up to have a letter of acceptance written. When it came down, the language did not suit him and stepping to the mantel, he wrote the letter as it now appears. Belknap and Chandler left, and the President again started for his

¹ Williams, *Life of R. B. Hayes*, Vol. I, p. 428.

walk. At the door he met Senators Morrill and Morton who detained him fifteen minutes in talk about the Belknap horror. When they left he walked leisurely to Ulke's and sat an hour and ten minutes. He did not know the shocking details which Bass was to tell him; but he knew that his favorite minister and wife were in disgrace. I asked him if the artist saw anything unusual in his face. He said, 'I think not.' I then asked him if he was himself conscious of any unusual agitation which was changing his ordinary expression. He said 'Oh no' as if surprised at my question. I told him I did not believe there was another man on the continent who could have said the same under such circumstances. His imperturbability is amazing. I am in doubt whether to call it greatness or stupidity."

While the air was still full of this disclosure Garfield went on a stumping tour in the New Hampshire spring election, expecting to find the party prostrated by the disgrace. To his great relief, he was able to write to his wife (March 10): "I saw by your last letter that the shadows of the Belknap horror were still hanging over you all in Washington. . . . It is a relief to see how the life of this northern country lifts the fog. I don't believe we shall lose a hundred votes in New Hampshire on that account." He proved right in his judgment and was cheered by a Republican success which he laid to the revived anti-Southern feeling. "This results," he wrote, "largely from the developed rebelism of the present House of Representatives. If our party behaves well, we have a good prospect of carrying the Presidential election next fall."

Garfield's feelings about the aspirants were gradually crystallizing. "There are several men," he wrote to Hinsdale (April 4), "for whom I will not vote if they are nominated. So much is settled with me. . . . I wish Blaine were less of a politician but I believe he will make a good president. Bristow is a higher type of man and I should feel that his election would need no apology." What turned Garfield from a lukewarm sympathizer with Blaine into an ardent supporter was the sudden eruption of a scandal about the latter, which became the political sensation of the spring. This was the

famous affair of the "Mulligan letters," which were supposed to show that Blaine, while Speaker, had speculated in the stock of a questionable railroad in Arkansas, and then had been extricated from a dangerous financial situation by the interposition of three other railroads, which took the stock off his hands at figures wholly unwarranted by its market value. The first mention of this in Garfield's journal was when, on April 18, Blaine told him "of a plot on the part of Conkling, Dorsey and Cornell to injure his presidential prospects" by asserting a connection between Blaine's support of Poland's Arkansas resolution of March, 1875, and his interest in the Fort Smith railroad. Garfield rallied instantly to Blaine's support. "It is shameful," he wrote (April 18), "the way our public men are assailed." His own experience in the *Crédit Mobilier* case predisposed him to consider any similar attack on a friend as equally baseless. No shadow of doubt of Blaine's integrity appeared in his journal or letters. On April 24 Blaine made a defense of himself in the House. "I think it was the almost universal sentiment," wrote Garfield, "that his reply was manly, truthful, and exhaustive. . . . I think his presidential future turned upon it, and if his opponents fail to beat him in nomination, it will be because he swept away the charges against him."

It is interesting to follow the rising sympathy of Garfield in his journal and letters for Blaine. On May 16 he wrote: "The political contest seems to be narrowed to Blaine in the front rank and Hayes in the second. The attacks on Blaine are reacting in his favor." On May 27 the railroad scandal boiled up again with the publication of the first of the "Mulligan letters" in the *New York Sun*. Garfield recognized the danger at once. "It will, I fear, greatly injure him," he wrote. "I was so much distressed that I went to his house at four o'clock and discussed the question. He has prepared a reply which will break the force of the letter a good deal. In ordinary times no harm would come of it, but the public is morbidly sensitive to anything connected with railroad affairs and I greatly fear this letter will lose Blaine the nomination." "June 1 A new sensation in the Blaine investi-

gation. A dramatic scene between himself and the Irish witness Mulligan. I am watching the progress of these assaults upon Blaine with anxious interest." This last referred to the occasion when Blaine secured his letters from Mulligan under promise to return them and then refused to do so.

On Sunday, June 4, he commented on Blaine's prospects, "I doubt if he can recover from the Mulligan complication. He is in this dilemma. If he publishes the letters they will probably afford materials for campaign scandal. If he refuses people will say there is something very criminal in them. I incline to believe that he ought to refuse and lose the presidency rather than surrender a private right. Still, if he fully vindicates his right to withhold and then chooses to present them it may turn the tide in his favor." Next day came the famous scene when Blaine, "taking forty millions into his confidence," read the letters in the House and exposed Knott, the Democratic chairman of the investigating committee, in having withheld an exculpatory cablegram. "The effect was very dramatic and electrical," wrote Garfield. "This was the climax of his triumph. Knott was completely crushed under it and the tide of sympathy turned very strongly in Blaine's favor. I have never witnessed so dramatic a scene since I have been in the House. It may give Blaine the nomination. The feeling tonight is that it will, though I am not so sure of his election as I would be glad to be." The next day he commented on the press notices. "June 7 The tide of reaction still seems to be sweeping strongly in his favor. The roar of the great dailies of the commercial centres would indicate an easy victory for him but the ground swell from the country districts would determine it and that is not yet heard from."

In this warm support of Blaine it is to be observed that Garfield's eyes were not blinded. On June 8 he wrote to Hinsdale: "Mr. Blaine is by no means my ideal of statesmanship. I believe, however, he would give us an honest and brilliant administration—much better than that we have had for the last eight years and very much better than any we could expect from Morton or Conkling." Still more significant were his words in the journal for that same day. "Called on

Blaine and talked with him on some passages in the Mulligan letters which are being criticised. . . . I shall not be surprised if he is nominated at Cincinnati, yet I feel some doubt about the effect of these letters. . . . He is certainly not the highest type of reformer. Hardly a reformer at all."

When, just at this critical juncture, three days before the meeting of the Cincinnati convention, Blaine fell ill on the steps of the Congregational Church and remained apparently unconscious for two days, Garfield's quick sympathies were stirred to the depths. He went at once to his house, and assumed charge of his political affairs, sending dispatches to Hale, Blaine's manager at Cincinnati, and to the press. The journal entries show Garfield's emotional tension. "June 11 If he dies of this it will be the work of political assassination, as really as though he had been stabbed." "Mon. 12 Could sleep but little last night on account of my anxiety for Blaine. . . . Went to Blaine's at half past five and found him a little better but most of the time unconscious. The family were greatly distressed by a request from the Judiciary committee to know when he would be able to be present at the investigation. I agreed to manage the answer." "Tues. 13. Went to Blaine early in the morning and found him still unconscious though I think he knows a good deal of what is said to him. . . . Several of us had arranged for a consultation at ten o'clock in regard to Blaine's situation which it is our duty to communicate to the Cincinnati Convention. But at ten minutes after eight o'clock he took the matter into his own hands by writing a connected and beautiful dispatch to Hale. The cloud has lifted and he is himself again."

But Blaine could not gain the nomination, in spite of his sudden and timely recovery. On June 16 Hayes received the majority on the eighth ballot. Garfield described the day thus in his journal. "Blaine sent for me two or three times to advise with him and I made two visits to Mr. Morton, one at his request in which, singularly enough, he desired me to cut Blaine and help him, Morton, so as to prevent the election of Conkling. I was with Blaine when the 7th Ballot was taken. So soon as New York cast so large a vote for Hayes, Blaine

foresaw the result and wrote his message of congratulation to Hayes before the nomination was announced. I am clearly of the opinion that it is better for Blaine not to be nominated, but New England has shown herself unworthy of having a president by her treatment of Blaine."

From the defeated Blaine Garfield turned, with no regrets other than personal ones, to the successful nominee, and on June 24 wrote Hayes a long letter of congratulation and advice. "I hope," he said, "you will not fail to make a pointed allusion to the reform of the Civil Service in your letter of acceptance. All classes of Republicans are looking for your letter with great anxiety. Far more than in any year of our history, the campaign will turn on your exposition of the platform. . . . I hope also you will emphasize the Specie payment question, to make up for the uncertainty of the language of the platform. I am sure we shall gain more by a bold and frank position than by any doubtful or uncertain expressions. I do not close my eyes to the fact that we have a hard and close contest before us. . . . I will give all the time I have to the coming campaign and hope you will communicate to me at any time any wish or suggestion." In sending a copy of this letter to Austin, Garfield observed (July 20), "You will see that Hayes adopted a part of my letter in his letter of acceptance."

The nomination of Hayes, an Ohio man, brought Garfield to the point where he must decide finally whether he should allow his name to go before the district convention or not. His letters show that all the friends who had been supporting his cause in the district urged him to continue in politics, notably Austin, who wrote as follows (April 21): "I am approaching the conclusion that your own personal interest and reputation demand fully as much now as two years ago that you should again come before the people. While we won the race it was with too many scratches and too many blows. . . . I don't feel and the public at large don't feel that you were fully vindicated, and it seems to me that it would be a *great mistake* for you to leave this district without that vindication. *You must not decline. You must be a candidate once more.*"

Garfield did not easily abandon his plan. He wrote in answer (May 1): "I cannot say that I will again be a candidate but I agree with you in the wisdom of conferring with my friends and keeping watch of the current of public feeling in the district. . . . My friends here do not tolerate the idea of my leaving Congress and are surprised that I should think of abandoning what they choose to call a 'brilliant career and still more brilliant prospects' when I am so much needed. But they do not see how certainly a few years of delay, while I am now at my prime, will leave me where I cannot command success at the bar, and where I will have no resources for the support of my large family and for old age. . . . Again, it is not a little galling to my pride, after all I have accomplished to give our district a name and influence in the national councils, to find that I can only continue in Congress by waging a warfare against the mean malignity of envious and bitter men who have succeeded in making many honest citizens believe that I am a corrupt and dishonest man. . . . Still I will keep my promise and hold the question open until I see you in June at the Hiram commencement." The result of the meeting at Hiram was to increase his discomfort. "Very greatly distressed about my future," he entered in the journal, June 22. "It seems as though I am at the parting of the ways."

By this time, however, he became aware that there were some circumstances connected with the firm with which he had been in negotiation that rendered a partnership not quite so desirable as he had supposed, and this probably sufficed to turn the scale. On July 1 he formally notified his friends in Ohio that he would again be a candidate for Congress and terminated the arrangement with the law firm. In a letter to Howells (July 19) he gave an idea of the pressure he was under: "I was very strongly desirous of withdrawing from the thankless task of public service. But Hayes has asked me to stand again and my friends are very desirous that I shall return. They want me for speaker." To Austin he said more fully (July 4), "Several leading men have expressed the desire to have me for the next Speaker." This was owing to the fact that the same month Blaine was ap-

pointed to fill out the unexpired term of Senator Morrill, who succeeded Bristow in the Treasury Department. This left Garfield the undisputed leadership in the House.

Garfield did not yield without an inner struggle. "I do this with great reluctance," he wrote in his journal July 1, "for I really want to get out of Congress, but I don't see how I can in the midst of this Presidential campaign. I am not at all happy in the prospect of continuing in Congress. . . . If we lose the next Congress I will certainly resign next year. This I record for a memorial." The next day he wrote: "Really I am more distressed at the prospect of remaining in Congress than I supposed I should be; though I presume I shall be somewhat saddened by the prospect of retiring. Inconsistent human nature."

With this decision Garfield definitely committed himself to remaining in political life and abandoned the idea of confining himself to the law. As the letters just quoted make clear, he was to assume, from this time onward, the express function of a defender and advocate of Hayes, the Ohio man nominated for the presidency, in the expectation of securing the Speakership of the House, and thus of attaining one of the highest political positions in the country. The old ideals of a Congressional service for the object of supporting sound finance, or rational taxation were no longer the main ones, but were to be subordinated henceforward to the object of aiding the party and the administration. The field was vastly enlarged; the prospects of conspicuous and dramatic action before Congress and the country were such as to stir the imagination of a man of Garfield's gifts, his temperament and his experience. It is small wonder that he assumed his new duties with high hopes and the joy of political battle within him.

The decision made, he turned at once to Austin and his other friends and began a canvass for the purpose of securing the nomination. After his triumph of 1874 this involved no severe contest, but it naturally demanded a certain amount of attention. On this occasion S. D. Northway, who had gained a few delegates in 1874, made a more extensive campaign. "Northway," wrote Garfield to his wife (July

27), "has been invited to come to the front in a card signed by 140 Republicans of Jefferson. The card says 'the time has come when the office ought to seek the man.' As a commentary on this doctrine Northway is riding through the district to give the office a chance to find him. The movement may be more formidable than I imagine but I don't see on what ground Northway builds his hopes. . . . But the contest fills my desk with letters." Garfield's correspondence shows that he kept in touch with the work done by his lieutenants in the district, but his real contribution to his own renomination was made in another way during July and August, namely, by the sudden party prominence he attained in these months.

As if anticipating his future leadership Garfield came forward in the remaining weeks of the Congressional session with a boldness and success that he had hardly yet exhibited. On July 13 he took occasion to meet, at the threshold, a sudden new issue which, to his mind, might, if not defeated, be as ruinous as the greenback movement. A bill to establish a subsidiary silver coinage, with which Garfield was wholly in sympathy, had been transformed by a House amendment into a bill for the free coinage of silver dollars, which would introduce into circulation a dollar worth less than eighty cents in gold. Garfield assailed with all his vigor the assertion that it would be perfectly in keeping with the act of 1869 to strengthen the public credit to pay the debt in silver, because that act had said "coin or its equivalent." "The amazing feature," he said, "of the case is that some good men do not see that this would be as dishonest as it would be ruinous in its results to the credit of the nation. If you insist," he continued, "on paying in silver, then I insist that your silver dollar must be equivalent to your gold dollar. Do gentlemen consent? . . . Manifestly not. Their incentive is gone the moment they are asked to put one hundred cents on the dollar. . . . There is now an opportunity to cheat several millions of men by adopting the baser metal as the standard of payment and thus accomplishing a swindle on so grand a scale as to make the achievement illustrious. . . . Since I have been in public life I have never known any

proposition that contained so many of the essential elements of vast rascality, of colossal swindling as this.”¹

The matter was dealt with by a policy of avoidance, as described by Garfield to Howells (August 11): “All the greenback men who have been in favor of flooding the country with depreciated paper money . . . have turned to silver . . . and insist upon coining millions and millions of silver dollars to pay the public debt, at the same time keeping all the paper money in circulation. . . . Those of us who have fought for a sound and stable currency found the damage to the public credit far more threatening than was the greenback. Without, therefore, committing ourselves to any specific settlement of the question in the midst of a heated presidential campaign we have agreed to refer the whole subject to a joint committee of the two Houses . . . to make a full report on the reassembling of Congress.”

Having thus served his party by sidetracking a dangerous subject, he next defended it by supporting his own record in the previous sessions against charges of extravagance. Garfield did this with reluctance, for he felt that partisan politics were out of place in dealing with appropriation bills. In this session he had repeatedly said that he was ready to assist the Democrats in every effort at a rational economizing, and he disclaimed any desire to raise party questions in that connection. But while his old critic, “Objector Holman,” was ready to accept this basis, other Democrats, such as S. S. Cox and Randall, insisted on trying to make party capital out of the “economy” they were displaying, and in order to do this considered it “good politics” to reject Garfield’s assistance and force him into antagonism by continually charging him with extravagance as Chairman of the Committee on Appropriations.

Compelled to reply, Garfield, on July 6, charged Cox and Randall with playing politics, “all because these gentlemen are preparing for an election, and when it is over they will come back to this place and make up by deficiency appropriations what they now refuse to provide for the manifest necessities of the public service. They know that I will join

¹ *Cong. Record*, 44 Cong., 1 sess., p. 4560.

them, notwithstanding their party zeal, in all honorable measures to reduce expenditures where reduction is possible.

. . . Now when the gentleman from New York comes here and undertakes to blacken the reputation of a worthy body of which he has long been a member, when he undertakes to cast discredit on one whom he knows to have worked faithfully in the line of retrenchment, he must consent to be told that his statements are unfounded in fact and unworthy of this place."¹ Cox defiantly retorted that Garfield had in fact increased expenditures nearly one third which led him, on July 29, to speak again, once more and in detail reviewing his record during the four years. Interesting to a student of finance, it need be noted here only as Garfield's final survey of his service as Chairman of the Committee on Appropriations, and also a defense of the Republican party record.²

But these speeches were all cast into the shade by the third important one which Garfield delivered just before the close of the session, under circumstances which he described in a letter to his wife. "I should have written before I went to the House (August 3), but for the fact that one of those occasions has come which it seems to be my lot to meet. Yesterday Mr. Lamar made a speech of nearly two hours in length on general politics, making a very able and what is considered a dangerous attack upon the Republican party. It was a speech he had prepared weeks ago and in the main had committed to memory. It was delivered with great effect; and by common consent I was expected to reply to him. I took the floor, but it was so late that the House adjourned; and I hurried away this morning to make preparations to reply. I have been kept [from speaking] all day by intervening business; but expecting every moment to get the floor. Having failed to do so, I come home to the anxiety of an undelivered speech, from which much is expected and now I find myself settling down into the despondent feeling that when I do get the floor, I shall not succeed. But I shall have no peace of mind until I fail or succeed."

The day after writing this letter, Garfield made his reply.

¹ *Cong. Record*, 44 Cong., 1 sess., p. 4428.

² *Ibid.*, Appendix, p. 275.

"I think I have never had the attention of the House more thoroughly," he recorded, "How the speech will read I cannot yet tell. . . . I think I have never been so enthusiastically applauded in the House. I was greatly exhausted by the effort and the heat and came home . . . my clothes drenched in perspiration." To his wife he wrote (August 5): "How I wanted you to sit beside me and tell me how I had done, for I never know at the moment. A speech is like a newborn baby—the mother and the speaker must wait until the child is dressed before they can tell whether it is a proper child or not." After he had seen it in print and revised it, so that it was able to be issued August 8, he felt that he had met Lamar successfully. "I believe my reply is a fair and conclusive answer to his philosophy," he said to Hinsdale (August 9).

Lamar had asserted that the time had come to eject the Republican party from power because it had made a great failure in federal government and a still greater one in its Reconstruction policy. The strength of his speech lay not in its vituperation or in its "sectionalism," for Lamar took good care to abstain from either of these, but in its use of undeniable patent facts to support a thesis, calmly argued. Lamar's biographer¹ points out that Garfield's speech, "while able and ingenious as a political discourse . . . did not deny any one of Mr. Lamar's propositions. . . . He contented himself with a vigorous arraignment of the general fitness of the Democratic party for the government of the country, leaving entirely unanswered the main point of Mr. Lamar's speech." If the main point of his speech was to point out the failure of the Reconstruction policy of the Republican party, it is obvious that Garfield did well in not attempting to answer it—it was not open to answer. But it is certainly true that Lamar began his speech with an argument for a change of party control, and it was this part which was considered dangerous. If all of the Lamar speech had been devoted to the Southern question, there would have been no reply necessary. It was the larger aspect which Gar-

¹ E. Mayes, *Life of L. Q. C. Lamar*, p. 288.

field took into account and with this alone that he felt called upon to deal.

There was just one way to meet it and that way was fully utilized by Garfield. First he analyzed Lamar's position. "He proposes to turn over the custody and management of the Government to a party which has persistently and with the greatest bitterness resisted all the great changes of the last fifteen years, a revolution in national policy, in social and political ideas." But "he did not by any word attempt to prove the fitness of the democracy as a political organization . . . and without that affirmative proof of fitness his argument falls to the ground." After a long analysis of the anti-negro attitude of the party in the South he added, "Let it be constantly borne in mind, that I am not debating a question of equal rights and privileges with the Union, but whether those who so lately sought to destroy it ought to be chosen to control its destiny for the next four years."

"I have no disposition nor would it be just to shield the republican party from fair and searching criticism. . . . It has made many mistakes. It has stumbled and blundered; it has had some bad men in it. . . . But has it been singular and alone in these respects? . . . Has the gentleman shown that the democratic party is its superior either in virtue or in intelligence?" To test this Garfield subjected the action of the Democratic majority in the existing House to a severe attack. His conclusion was that it was unsafe to place a party in power that nominated men "who in our days of greatest danger esteemed party above country. No, no, gentlemen, our enlightened and patriotic people will not follow such leaders in their rearward march."¹

The reply to Lamar was another long step forward in the direction first indicated by the reply to Hill. It was Garfield's first emphatically partisan speech in Congress and it was much more of an "oration" than anything he had uttered for years. This does not mean that he returned in the slightest to the somewhat florid and decorated style of his first Congressional efforts, for the reply to Lamar pre-

¹ *Works of James A. Garfield*, Vol. II, p. 353; *Cong. Record*, 44 Cong., 1 sess., pp. 5178 ff.

served the compact and definite manner of his maturer years; but that it had the air and manner of a demonstrative address, not of an argument to move the minds of his hearers.

It was, in short, a good "stump speech"—the sort of thing in which Garfield was a master, but which he had hitherto kept wholly out of Congress. As such the success it scored was tremendous, so much so as fairly to amaze Garfield himself. "I should be ashamed to repeat even to you," he told Austin (August 6), "a little of the things that are said to me by friends and enemies alike in regard to my debate with Lamar. Of course the praise is absurdly extravagant." To his wife (August 6): "Letters are pouring in from all sides. My friends talk like crazy men about it and I am sure its reading cannot come up to their expectations." Again (August 10): "Still the letters come in for my speech and such compliments as would make us both blush if you were here. But I care more to know your own clear judgment than that of all of them." And so it continued. By the time Congress adjourned, August 15, Garfield's speech was being printed by the ton for circulation as a campaign document in the coming presidential contest. He had stepped at once to the very front of the party.

When Garfield went back to Ohio he found that all resistance to him had disappeared. Northway had withdrawn from the contest, and he was welcomed as a hero when he went to Warren, August 22, to attend the convention. "The change from two years ago," he wrote, "is very marked. . . . From early in the morning the throng of friends and converted enemies came to see me. My speeches in Congress at the late session especially that in reply to Lamar is spoken of constantly." The twenty-second of August he was nominated by acclamation, was received by the convention with enthusiasm and serenaded in the evening. "On the whole," he commented, "the change during the past two years, though personally gratifying to me, does not enhance my respect for the popular steadiness of judgment." The fact was, Garfield's changed status in the party and his reply to Lamar had made him invincible. His enemies of 1874 were

unreconciled, but they found themselves helpless under the circumstances and made no contest in the primaries.

The campaign of 1876 was severe and exhausting. Garfield began by a stumping tour in Maine, September 2 to 12, in which he visited the northern Aroostook region, which struck him as incredibly remote and primitive. "A more wild and worthless country I have not seen east of the Rocky Mountains," he wrote home (September 5). While he was there he heard that the irreconcilables in the nineteenth district had raised their heads. "This morning," he wrote his wife (September 8), "I have seen the *N. Y. Tribune* of the 5th which informs me that 25 Republicans have joined in calling an anti-Garfield convention in our 19th District. Perhaps this is just as well. Let my enemies separate themselves so that good men may know them and remember them."

This movement was more carefully managed than it had been two years before and a coalition with the Democrats was finally brought about, with General J. S. Casement as the candidate. This meant a recurrence of the personalities of 1874, for the bolters rested their case on Garfield's "systematic corruption, perjury and bribery," and issued a broadside containing a reprint of the *Sun* charges of 1874 with additional material of the same general character. The method employed was to print parts of the *Congressional Globe*, or the report of the *Crédit Mobilier* testimony or to state the De Golyer facts, accompanying them with a running comment which put the worst possible construction on everything that was said about Garfield or by him.

When Garfield returned to the state he went vigorously into the canvass, devoting most of his time to debating national issues, although he paused occasionally to defend himself. On October 5, for instance, he wrote home from Burton. "Yesterday afternoon I came here . . . and found the town in an uproar. Burrows and Murray had spoken here the night before and had spent nearly three hours in the most brutal assault upon me and they had carried away not a few weak-kneed Republicans. A crowded house, filled with anxiety and suspicions met me. I 'went for' my defamers. My hoarseness mellowed down under the pressure of necessity

and I spoke two hours and a half. I hope and believe to the confusion of my enemies."

Garfield's letters and journals show that he did not consider himself in any real danger, for very many who had opposed him in 1874 now announced their support, the determining factor being his new and increased importance in Congress. The *Conneaut Reporter*, a Hurlburt paper in 1874, put this plainly: "His course during his present term has been such as to make him the acknowledged leader of the House. His speech on the amnesty question and his reply to Lamar have made him numerous warm friends in this District and to-day there are many who opposed General Garfield two years ago that will be warm in his support at the October election."

Garfield's own reflection was, of course, assured, but the vote for General Casement, the opposition candidate, was the largest ever cast against him in the district.

	Garfield	Casement
Ashtabula	5,893	2,547
Geauga	2,641	905
Lake	2,562	1,376
Portage	3,508	2,960
Trumbull	5,408	3,562
	20,012	11,349

Heavy as was the vote for Garfield, the size of the opposition shows that some of the bolters of 1874 were unreconciled.

The result in Ohio spurred him to greater efforts. "I am not a little depressed at the prospects of the Presidential election," he wrote to Hinsdale (October 16), "for though we made solid gains on Tuesday yet the margin of loss we can suffer and still win the battle is so small that the hazard is very great. . . . I shall feel the deepest anxiety till the end comes. I did not intend ever again to become so deeply interested in any campaign but the great stake involved in the loss of the national control and its transfer to the Democracy fills me with alarm and apprehension." He next turned

eastward, began a speaking tour along the line of the Erie Railroad from New Jersey westward across New York and labored desperately until the end of October, when he was called home by the fatal illness of his youngest boy, just over a year old. After the funeral he resumed his task, however, and with a sore and exhausted heart continued speaking until the eve of the election.

"Now that the campaign work is done," he recorded in his journal, "I feel a reaction from the hope and faith with which I have kept up this work. . . . I am clear that this will be the closest Presidential election I have ever seen." On November 6 he added: "I did not know that I could feel such anxiety about an election as I do about this. I presume my own discussion of the issues has given me an exaggerated view of the dangers which may follow if Tilden is elected. I hope so." "Nov. 7. At nine A.M. vote for Hayes and Wheeler. . . . I have voted at six Presidential elections but never at one of the results of which I feel so much doubt. Still it does not seem possible that the good sense and patriotism of this country can allow the destiny of the nation to pass into the control of rebels." By the time he had reached Washington again, November 9, the news had gone over the United States that the Democrats had again carried the House, that the Senate was in doubt, that the electoral college was so close that only the vote of the three remaining carpet-bag states could decide, and that their vote was claimed by both sides.

To Garfield it was a black outlook. "The future of our country," he wrote to Fuller (November 9), "no one can tell. It now appears that we were defeated by the combined power of rebellion, catholicism and whiskey a trinity very hard to conquer. . . . We shall have a hard, uncomfortable struggle to save the fruits of the great war. . . . If we had carried the House it was almost certain that I should have been elected Speaker, but of course that has gone down in the general wreck."

CHAPTER XVII
VISITING STATESMAN AND ELECTORAL
COMMISSIONER

1876-1877

ON November 10, three days after the election, Garfield found himself confronted by a new crisis. "On my return home in the evening," he wrote in his journal, "I found the following dispatch, dated this afternoon. . . . 'I would be gratified if you would go to New Orleans to remain until the vote of Louisiana is counted. Governor Kellogg requests that reliable witnesses be sent to see that the canvass of the vote is a fair one. Answer U. S. Grant.' I am in much doubt what reply I ought to make. If both political parties are to be represented by fair men I shall be willing to bear my share of the responsibility. But if violent men on either side are to be invited, I shall stand a chance of suffering political injury and accomplishing no good. . . . The elections seem to hang by a thread. The day of choice has passed. We have only one duty, to ascertain who is elected and see that he is so declared." That day and the next Garfield took council with Judge Swayne and others, and when Grant returned to Washington from Philadelphia and again urged him to accept, he yielded. He wrote to Hinsdale in full, expressing his discomfort and reluctance (November 11):

"The deadlock in the returns of the presidential election raises a new and dangerous question at the precise point where our institutions are weakest and wholly untried. . . . We are on the verge of a double difficulty. The first and immediate one is this:—what shall be done to secure an honest and faithful count of the votes actually cast? At the present moment, it seems that the result hangs on the count of the vote of Louisiana, and the Democratic party asserts that the Governor of that state and his board of canvassers will

not act honestly in the premises but will count Hayes in, at all hazards. On the other hand, the Republicans assert that the rebel Democracy of the South, aided by the Northern Democracy, are determined that the count shall be so tainted with fraud and violence that it cannot be used at all, and thus, by leaving it out, Tilden will have a majority of the electoral votes. Now none of the dangers mentioned are provided against either in the constitution or the laws of the United States; and we are left to the patriotism, the good sense and the justice of a small number of men."

After reviewing the action of the Democratic national committee and of President Grant in inviting prominent public men to go to New Orleans to watch the count, and describing his reluctance to be involved, he concluded, "It may be a duty of the very highest sort, which I have no right to decline on any personal ground." . . . In a postscript, dated 8:30 p.m., he reported his final decision and gave the list of the other Republicans.

Then followed Garfield's journey to New Orleans as one of the "visiting statesmen," so called. He started from Washington on the night of November 11, reached New Orleans three days later and remained until December 2, when he left for the North, reaching Washington December 5, the day after the opening of Congress. During this period he and his Republican associates managed to arrange things with the Louisiana Returning Board in such wise that the electoral vote of the state should be announced as cast for Hayes, but they achieved this in such a manner as to satisfy Garfield's constantly expressed desire for a perfectly legal procedure. From Garfield's journal and his letters to his wife it would be possible to follow almost minutely the course of events during this experience, but a comparatively few extracts will suffice to show the part that Garfield played and the nature of his observations.

To begin with, Garfield evidently started with the assumption that unless there had been intimidation and violence by the "White League" the state would have been carried for Hayes by the negro vote. His previous interest in Louisiana politics had been not inconsiderable, owing to the fact that

his old comrades, Sheldon and Pardee of the Forty-second, were both residents of New Orleans and had taken some part in carpet-bag politics. Sheldon had been twice elected to Congress and on one occasion his success was due to the fact that the vote of part of his district which rolled up Democratic majorities had been thrown out on charges of intimidation. Garfield was also undoubtedly influenced by Hoar's report of 1875, which laid great stress on the "outrages" against negroes as the basis for Democratic successes. He was a great friend of Hoar and a neighbor of his on the floor of the House.¹ As in the case of Fitz-John Porter, his mind was prepared in advance for one particular solution of the situation. On this occasion, when he arrived on November 14 he was met by General Sheldon and the two went at once to Pardee's house, which Garfield made his headquarters during most of his stay. Under such circumstances, nothing but the most irresistible demonstration of the justice of the Democratic claims as to the vote for electors could have overcome his predispositions in the case, and such proof was in no sense forthcoming.

It was easy, therefore, for Garfield to join with his fellow Republicans in declining a proposal from the Democratic "visiting statesmen" to unite with them in influencing the Louisiana Returning Board to "count and declare the votes actually cast." The Republicans unanimously approved a reply by Stanley Matthews to the effect that "not the votes actually cast but the votes legally cast, were the object and aim of the law." "I hope you will read this correspondence," he wrote to his wife (November 15), "which I think is a pretty good piece of thrust and parry with thrust in return." The reason for this he mentioned in the same letter when he added, "I do not see the outcome of the work here; but I believe that a fair count of the lawful vote of this state will give it to Hayes." This last opinion he repeated in almost every letter. It implied the intention to approve a policy of excluding illegal votes on the part of the Returning Board, together with the assumption that such votes would be, in most cases, Democratic.

¹ G. F. Hoar, *Autobiography*, Vol. I, p. 402.

Two days later he reported the agreement by which the danger of secret proceedings by the Returning Board was overcome. "Another day of turmoil, dispatches, rumors, arguments, anxieties and doubts, has left me jaded and weary of the incessant strain of uncertain expectation. . . . This morning we had some ground to fear that the Board would shut their doors and keep out spectators altogether, and thus serve to inflame the public mind with suspicion that the Board were determined to count a Republican majority right or wrong. To avoid such a course we spent a good share of the day in conducting a series of interviews which finally resulted in an agreement that the Board will invite five Democrats and five Republicans from abroad, of those now here, to attend the meetings and witness their proceedings. . . . I shall try to get off from service on it if I can do so honorably but I fear I shall be compelled to stay. . . . So far as I can now observe the honest vote of the state was for Hayes; but the state of feeling, and the consequent outrages make it somewhat uncertain as to the state of the ballot." He wrote a similar letter to Hayes.¹

Two days later he said, still more definitely: "I think the result of a just count will give this state to Hayes. But to make all the steps so plain and clear as to satisfy an incredulous and suspicious public opinion will be a task most difficult." On the twentieth, when the counting had begun, he wrote home: "I am sitting in the hall of the Board of canvassers . . . with my overcoat on, and occasionally go to the stove to keep warm. Strange, that in the land of flowers, so cold a day should look down upon roses and orange groves. The weather seems to have imparted its fickleness to the people, who smile in the morning and murder at night. My old opinion of the Latin races is confirmed that they have not the genius for self-government. When you reflect that the interest and passion of 45,000,000 of people are concentrated upon the work going on in this room you can imagine the strain and stress of the hour and how much steadiness of mind and nerve are needed to bear one's self through it and keep his head cool."

¹ Williams, *Life of R. B. Hayes*, Vol. I, p. 502, note.

Since the possibility of counting the electoral vote of the state for Hayes depended upon the extent to which the Returning Board threw out the entire returns from parishes where there were heavy Democratic majorities, the Republican "visiting statesmen" undertook to back them up by going over the evidences of intimidation in such voting districts, with a view to defending their action in Congress or elsewhere if necessary. "We who are to bear the brunt of the battle in Congress," he wrote (November 23), "can be prepared for the contest only by mastering the whole case. To do so it is necessary to examine the political history . . . of the special parishes where violence and intimidation have vitiated the result of the election. We are parcelling out the testimony and taking hold of the work of mastering it."

The next day he continued: "I spent four hours in reading and briefing the points of testimony in relation to the Parish of West Feliciana. The papers are very voluminous and many of them are made out by men who were not familiar with legal forms. But I will be able to draft a paper on the state of affairs in that parish which will show our Northern people how justly the vote can be thrown out." Three days later he added (November 27): "The facts disclosed in the testimony which I have examined, show the most malignant cunning in their methods of overawing and controlling the negro vote. Whichever way the vote of the state may be counted, the other side will complain; but if good men find any fault with Louisiana for rejecting the vote of the intimidated parishes I shall be greatly surprised." In his journal he wrote: "There are forty-nine depositions and they are very lengthy. Much of the evidence is hearsay, but there is enough lawful evidence in it to startle me with the strength of the case." The way in which this action of his would appear to his critics did not escape him. "The trouble is," he wrote to his wife (November 27), "that party passion has so blinded the eyes of men that many will not see the plainest statement of fact in reference to the case. I have no doubt I run the risk of being called a partisan in the position I shall take."

The journal shows that during these days of planning and

conferring and reading evidence, the "visiting statesmen" were shown the interesting sights of the city. On November 20 a party, including General Sherman and guided by their old-time foe, General Beauregard, made an excursion down the Mississippi to see the Eads jetties. Garfield's home letters show his interest in the novel scenery along the banks and the historic sites. "Vast plantations producing cotton, sugar cane, or rice lined the banks on either side, and great orange groves made the shore beautiful with green and gold." He described the jetties themselves with great zest; also the alligators, long-necked cranes, and flocks of white pelicans, and the glorious sunset seen across the delta as they returned. He did not fail to talk with General Beauregard. "He told me, quite fully, the history of the battle of Shiloh, in which we were both engaged. . . . It was curious to hear the history of the battle by the rebel commander."

On the twenty-sixth, visiting congressmen of both parties were given a banquet at the sugar plantation of ex-Governor Warmoth, another carpet-bagger, and E. Lawrence. The description in the journal indicates that Garfield's companions found the occasion exhilarating. "Lawrence spoke, and declared that he had no doubt that the vote of Louisiana was strongly and honestly for Hayes. Judge Kelley spoke twenty-five minutes on the tariff!! George Sheridan shook the table with his wit. Smith of Wisconsin repeated a part of his campaign speech against carpet-baggers, and Job Stevenson, too full of wine, made a five-mile speech, in which he damned the individual states and parties but hurrahed for the Union, Humanity and God. The scene was amusing beyond description."

The committee stayed until the counting of the votes was finished by the Returning Board, with the outcome already forecast, *i.e.*, that enough parishes where Democratic outrages had taken place were thrown out to wipe out an apparent Democratic majority in the popular vote and leave Hayes with a safe lead. When a final letter to President Grant had been drawn up and agreed upon, the Northerners took their departure. Garfield bade good-by to Pardee "and at five o'clock, [December 2] Sherman, Stoughton, Hale,

Van Allen, White and I took a Pullman Palace car to Cincinnati. As the night came on prairie fires were blazing on both sides of the road and the bright moonlight was very beautiful, made more so by the fact that we were making our way homeward after a long and weary sojourn. We have staid from the opening of the Board to its close. The last testimony was filed before it at twelve o'clock today. I hope and believe we have done the country some service."

Garfield's summing up of this whole experience was made, as usual with him, in a letter to Hinsdale dated December 4. "I have been," he began, "in what seemed a different world from ours—a world in which the modes of thought and action are in many respects un-American, and un-republican. We divided up among us the several bull-dozed parishes, and made a careful analysis of the testimony, so as to get a clear and connected view of the facts. I can only say, that making all due allowance for the exaggeration which partisanship and the sense of personal wrong naturally make, I know of nothing in modern history so destructive of popular government, and so shocking to humanity as the conduct of the Rebel Democracy during the four months that preceded the late election in Louisiana. They acted upon a preconcerted plan, and intended to do just enough violence and murder to accomplish their purpose and no more. But in their zeal they so far overdid it as to make a remedy possible. . . . The thing that did happen was that the Democracy carried the work into several Democratic parishes, to increase their majority and thus made it lawful to throw out those also. I have no doubt that Hayes has a decided majority of the votes legally cast and I believe it will be so declared. I am amazed to see *The Nation* making the atrocious proposition that some Republican elector shall vote for Tilden. I had not conceived it possible that such a proposition could come from such a source. I would insist upon throwing out the vote of these parishes if there were nothing depending upon it in reference to a choice of President. The only cure for such crime is to let the criminals know they cannot reap any benefit from it. Defeat their object, whenever it can be lawfully done, and they will not be so likely to repeat it.

"The majority of the population of the city is French, and care more for France than for the United States. They have been badly governed and have been greatly cursed by adventurers and by the favorites of Grant. They have many reasons for dissatisfaction, but none for the fickle, mercurial, and barbarous spirit which they carry into politics. You will be surprised to learn that many men there have lost their faith in our form of government, and are in favor of an Empire. They tell me that was the inner purpose of those who organized the rebellion, that the Confederate constitution was understood to be only provisional, and that the wealthiest leaders revelled in the visions of Dukedoms, Earldoms and Baronetcies.

"The future of the negro is a gloomy one unless some new method can be introduced to adjust him to his surroundings. His labor is indispensable to the property of the South. His power to vote is a mortal offense to his late masters. If they control, it will not only be a wrong to him, but a dangerous increase of their power. If he votes against them, as he almost universally endeavors to do, he will perpetuate the antagonism which now bears such baneful fruit. I am tangled in the meshes of this strange problem."

One of the difficulties the Republican defenders of the counting of the vote in Louisiana had to meet was the bad odor in which the members of the Returning Board stood among large numbers in the North. They were the same men whose conduct in "counting in" a Republican legislature in 1875 had been censured by two separate investigating committees composed mainly of Republicans, and had been overriden by the "Wheeler adjustment." On that occasion Garfield had referred to them as "a graceless set of scamps." Now, by not dissimilar methods, they had "counted in" the Hayes electors. How was a distinction to be drawn? The Democrats were leaving no stone unturned to heap odium on the honesty of the Board, and it looked as though that issue alone might determine the outcome.

While at New Orleans Garfield had seen something of the members and with his usual—in this case doubtless too great—tendency to think well of people, set down the following

judgment. "Nov. 23 At six P.M. dined at Governor Kellogg's with J. Madison Wells and General Anderson of the Returning Board, Mrs. Senator Harris and Mrs. Kellogg. Of our party Sherman, Hale and Stoughton were with me. . . . My opinion of the Returning Board is far better than it was before I came." When the "visiting statesmen" made their report to Grant, Sherman further insisted on including a warm testimonial to the integrity of the Board. When queried about this by Hinsdale, Garfield admitted: "I did not think it altogether wise in our Committee to say so much as was said in regard to the personnel of the Returning Board; but Sherman defended that paragraph in this way. He said in the first place that he and Stoughton had made careful inquiries of various parties who knew the members of the Board well and found out their history down to the present time. He also said that it was important to resist the determined purpose manifested in the newspapers to break down the confidence of the people in the justice of the Board." So they were all fully embarked on the policy of upholding these particular men.

Congress assembled before Garfield and his party reached Washington, and owing to the death of the Democratic Speaker it was necessary to elect a successor. The majority accordingly chose Randall of Pennsylvania, while the Republicans, recognizing the leadership credited to Garfield since Blaine's departure to the Senate, cast their complimentary ballot for him. It was henceforward his duty to assume the post of floor leader. After the committee had made its report to Grant, December 6, it was Garfield's business to study out a policy for his party during the grave crisis which loomed directly ahead over the method of counting the electoral vote, in view of the disputed returns in the Southern states.

The elements in the situation were as follows: In the first place, Congress had repeatedly undertaken to say in advance that on various grounds votes from certain states should not be counted, the most recent action being the resolution excluding the unreconstructed states. In 1873 Congress had in addition excluded certain specific votes—those cast for

Greeley after his death—and had refused to count all those from Louisiana and Arkansas under the operation of a sweeping rule, the twenty-second joint rule. This provided that if objection were made to receiving any vote during the count, the Houses should separate and, unless each resolved that the vote should be counted, the objection should stand. It had been intended to enable either House to shut out the vote of a Southern state in 1865 when both Houses were Republican. It was apparent in 1876 that if the rule were now applied it would be a simple matter for the Democratic House of Representatives to cause the exclusion of any carpet-bag electors and thus force the election of Tilden, unless the Republican Senate should embark upon a ruthless policy of “objecting” to counting the votes of Democratic states. No one could tell where such possibilities of wrangling might lead the two Houses.

Garfield went to work vigorously December 11. “Spent the evening reading up the early history of counting the electoral vote.” After a rapid but thorough study he came to the conclusion first that the twenty-second joint rule had no validity unless voted for each particular Congress by each House, and, with that out of the way, the right to open and count the electoral votes really lay with the Vice-President or, in his absence, the President *pro tempore* of the Senate. The first position he set forth in a speech of December 12, and it is interesting to see how seriously and respectfully he was questioned by supporters and opponents alike, while it is obvious that in this field of minute and detailed argumentation, largely legal in character, he himself took as much pleasure as he did in the broader field of party oratory.¹

On the other point, the constitutional method of counting the electoral vote of a state, Garfield had no chance to speak for a month, and during the intervening time events developed rapidly into a dangerous situation. The excitement in the Democratic press over the “theft” of the votes of Louisiana and Florida ran high and the demand was insistently made that the House majority should “do something”

¹ *Cong. Record*, 44 Cong., 2 sess., p. 146.

radical to reverse the decision and discipline the Returning Boards. The Democrats in the House immediately attacked the subject by providing for investigating committees, representing both parties, according to custom, to examine officially the electoral voting in the doubtful states of Florida and Louisiana. Garfield was selected for the Florida committee, but on his first appearance in the House asked to be excused from serving, "my friends thinking" he says in the journal "that I ought to remain in the House."

Under the circumstances public business was almost at a standstill. "The Democrats," observed Garfield December 8, "are without a policy or a leader. They are full of passion and want to do something desperate but hardly know how to get at it. They adjourned the House before two o'clock today and went into caucus." On December 11 he wrote: "The Democrats seem to have no plan of operations. They skirmish about for an hour or two." But on that same day he became aware, soon after the opening of the session, that the Southern Democrats were using much less violent language than the Northern, and presently he found himself approached, as party floor leader and as a friend of Hayes, with a series of proposals for a sort of deal or bargain between Hayes and the Southern whites. On December 11 he wrote in the diary of being informed indirectly by Young of Tennessee "that if we could give such men as he good ground to stand on, fifty Democratic Congressmen would stand by Hayes."

On the thirteenth he wrote to Hayes, pointing out that while the Northern Democrats, led by Randall and Wood, were filling the air with threats, "the Democratic business men of the country are more anxious for quiet than for Tilden, and the leading Southern Democrats in Congress are saying that they have seen war enough and don't care to follow the lead of their Northern associates. . . . After my speech today . . . as to the validity of the Joint Rules, Hill came to me and said 'You are clearly right, and I don't intend to follow our people in this sort of reckless warfare.' Just what sort of assurance the Southern members want is not quite so clear. . . . Let me say I do not think anybody

should be the custodian of your policy, or have any power to commit or embarrass you in any way, but it would be a great help if, in some discreet way, those Southern men who are dissatisfied with Tilden and his more violent followers could know that the South was going to be treated with kind consideration by you."

Garfield's journal records several conferences with moderate Southerners. He wrote to Hinsdale (December 18): "The situation here grows serious. A considerable portion of the Democrats really mean mischief. It is claimed that they are enrolling and organizing military forces in several of the states to compel the inauguration of Tilden at all hazards. . . . But the country may receive the unexpected help of the Southern Democrats. . . . I am studying their advances with great interest not unmixed with some suspicion of its good faith."

The effort of the Democratic committee of investigation to overhaul the action of the Louisiana Returning Board led to stubborn refusals on the part of that body to make any revelations, and to equally stiff objections by the Western Union Telegraph Company to surrender their copies of telegrams sent to the Board. In the debates which arose in the House over the steps taken by the committee to compel these to testify or surrender, Garfield occasionally took part. On December 27 he had an opportunity to rebuke a Democratic fire-eater. "Banning talked of the people rising to resist the inauguration of Hayes. I replied in a speech of about twenty-five minutes rather effectively I think. I note Banning's speech as the first open declaration looking towards violence that has yet been made in Congress. The newspapers ought everywhere to scorch him for it so that others will be deterred from a like action." In this speech, besides pouring sarcasms upon Banning, Garfield pointed out that the way votes were counted in any state was a matter for state law. In Ohio election boards inspected and threw out individual ballots—he described the process in detail—but in Louisiana the local boards had no such power. Their functions were simply to send the ballot boxes to the state Returning Board. "Now does my colleague propose to say," he asked, "that

this House has the right, by means of its committees, to go behind every returning board in Ohio and all the other states and make a recount of the 7,000,000 ballots cast, and thus determine who was elected president?"¹

Garfield's position that the right to "open and count" the electoral votes belonged, under the Constitution, to the President of the Senate, Ferry of Connecticut, was too bold for many members of his own party, who feared that any effort to carry through such a program would lead to a withdrawal of the House from the joint session and the defeat of any election. Under the influence of such ideas, a majority in each House voted for a select committee on the electoral count, and these, acting together, began the consideration of some possible compromise scheme. One such that was discussed in the press was to submit the count to a joint committee composed of an equal number from each party, from which one member was to be drawn by lot. "Better go back to the days of the Roman Augurs at once," commented Garfield, "and inspect the entrails of a calf and the flight of birds."

The weak point in the Republican position lay in the fact that sundry powerful Senators were determined on a compromise. Garfield wrote (January 4): "Senator Dorsey . . . feared Conkling was going to fail us in the Presidential struggle and that several of the carpet-bag Senators were dissatisfied, fearing that Hayes was unfriendly to them. . . . I incline to think that the appointment of the compromise committee was a mistake." The next day Senator Sherman confirmed the news as to Conkling. "How many senators he can carry with him is not certain."

On the sixteenth of January Garfield finally got a chance to deliver his views, when the Democrats, still trying to coerce the Louisiana Returning Board, brought up a resolution to arrest them and bring them before the House for contempt. He wrote in the journal: "I gave them notice we should resist it and demanded three hours for debate which was finally granted. I took the third half-hour and replied to the proposition of the Committee that the constitutional

¹ *Cong. Record*, 44 Cong., 2 sess., pp. 378-381.

clause empowering the legislatures of the states to appoint electors, incidentally gave authority to Congress to inquire whether that was done in accordance with the law of a state. My friends think I made a more than usually effective speech and I am inclined to concur with them. I used a portion of the speech I had already prepared for Louisiana."

In this speech Garfield limited the powers of Congress in connection with the "appointment" of electors by a state to five points—to determining whether the body was a state, whether the right number of electors was chosen, whether any of the electors were disqualified by holding a federal office, whether the state voted for electors on the legal day and whether the electors cast their ballots on the day defined by statute. "If the House bases its right," he concluded,¹ "to inquire into the election in Louisiana upon any of these limitations, their inquiry might have some ground of authority; but if we presume to inquire as to any other point we are absolutely violating the Constitution of the United States. . . . It is none of our business how a state exercises this power to appoint electors so long as it keeps within the five limitations I have named."

Following this succinct statement Garfield went on to show by historical examples how Congress had never before, even under the most extreme provocation, made any attempt to inquire into the circumstances under which electors were chosen. He closed with charging the Democrats, professed believers in states' rights, with the intention of making a "fatal assault upon whatever there may be of sovereignty in the thirty-eight states." In the case of Oregon, where the governor's certificate seemed to cover the violent substitution of a Democratic electoral vote for a Republican, Garfield remained consistent, saying, "If the fraud in the State of Oregon has been so committed that we have no power to inquire into it without violating the limitations of the constitution, then I hope Mr. Tilden will be counted in by fraud and elected."²

To make matters worse, the carpet-bag government in

¹ *Cong. Record*, 44 Cong., 2 sess., p. 674.

² *Ibid.*, p. 677.

Louisiana gave signs of collapsing before the electoral count began. On January 14 Garfield reported that Stoughton and Chandler called to consult. "They have news that the Packard government will fall to pieces in a few hours if it be not recognized by the President; and a committee goes to see Grant on the subject. . . . I am appointed as one of six of Hayes' friends to confer with doubtful Senators and confirm their courage. At four p.m. Stoughton came with a report that Grant sent a telegram to New Orleans recognizing the Packard government. So another snag is pulled, but a heavy load is laid on Hayes if he comes in." On January 20 Garfield tried to impress Grant with the necessity of supporting the Louisiana carpet-baggers for consistency's sake, but found Grant pessimistic. "He dont think that Packard can be sustained," ran the journal, "but believes he will be driven from the state as soon as the electoral count is decided. This seems to be a bad outlook for our friends in Louisiana and I dont see how the vote for electors and that for governor can be separated."

Meanwhile the first event had occurred which really disturbed Garfield's steadiness of temper, in the shape of the report of the Compromise Committee in favor of an Electoral Commission, to be composed of five Senators, five members of the House and five Judges of the Supreme Court. To this body were to be referred all cases where the electoral vote of a state or an individual was challenged in the process of counting, and the two Houses, voting separately, did not overrule the objection. The report of the Commission was to stand, unless overruled by both Houses of Congress. Garfield had hitherto refused to believe in any real crisis and had criticised very vigorously such as voiced their alarm. On December 15 he wrote: "I have long been indignant at the fact that in nearly every period of our history, American statesmen have been speaking of the downfall of the Republic. When a party or a politician is disappointed it seems to be the habit to fall back and prophesy the failure of the Republic. The same thing is reappearing in the present entanglement. I take no stock in this theory of ruin." On January 1 he noted: "Something of the gloom of the political

situation was seen among the people on whom I called, and some expression of a fear that we might not see another peaceful New Years at the White House. I do not share to any great extent in this fear. Each generation of men ought to be able to meet emergencies that arise in their own epoch and this is one that we should provide for."

In his annual letter to Hinsdale (January 4, 1877), Garfield still spoke courageously. "The behaviour of a great nation, in the administration of its laws, at a critical moment, is more important than the fate of any one man or party. We have reached a place where the road is marked by no footprint, and we must make a track that will be fit to follow after we are dead. It is only at such times that the domain of law is enlarged and the safeguards of liberty are increased. I confess to you, that I do not feel adequate to the task; but I shall do my best to point out a worthy way to the light and the right."

But when the committee report was made on January 18, Garfield distinctly lost his composure. In the journal he wrote: "What I may think of it when I have studied it more carefully may change my present impression, but it appears to me not only a surrender of a certainty for an uncertainty but it seems to me a cowardly mortgaging of the safety of the future to secure an escape from a present danger. I doubt if we shall ever have another Presidential election by the people in the old sense of the term if this bill becomes law."

In great disgust Garfield sent to Hayes (January 19) a much angrier letter than was his wont. "I have no words to describe my indignation at the fact and manner of the surrender which the Senate has made. Nothing in the world was necessary but for the Senate to support its presiding officer in following the early precedents, which were made under the fresh impulses of the constitution, then recently adopted. A little bluster, a new burst of newspaper wrath and all would have been over. I don't believe one half of one per cent of our party had any doubt of the justice and essential fairness of your election and of the right of the President of the Senate to declare it.

"Our friends on the House side of the Committee would never have agreed to the bill but from the conviction that enough Republican Senators would follow Conkling to leave Ferry without support. A compromise like this is singularly attractive to a class of men who think that the truth is always half way between God and the Devil and not to split the difference would be partisanship."

In spite of the outburst of approval which the bill received from the business interests and many moderates, Garfield determined to oppose it and made careful preparation for a speech, drawing information notably from Evarts, and suggestions from other public men as well as from his reading. On two days he heard Conkling defend the bill in the Senate. "He certainly is an able debater," wrote Garfield, "and his manners are very striking, though stagy. I was surprised at his mass of words in proportion to the ideas they contained." And later: "Heard the second installment of Conkling's speech. Many words and sonorous in which his ideas were badly stifled." On this same day Garfield gave a hint to Blaine, evidently trying to play on his presidential ambitions. "Saw Blaine, who, I think, is wavering in regard to the bill. I told him that the West would never forgive the East if they deserted us in this hour."

Finally, on the twenty-fifth, he made his effort, speaking nearly an hour and a quarter. Especially noteworthy was the temper of Garfield's introduction, when, as was so frequently his habit, he appealed to the House to view the problem on a high plane of constitutional and governmental justice. "It is not enough," he said, "that a bill will tide us over a present danger, however great. Let us for a moment forget Hayes and Tilden, republicans and democrats; let us forget our own epoch and generation and, entering a broader field, inquire how this thing which we are about to do will affect the great future of the Republic. . . . In my view then, the foremost question is this; what will be the effect of this measure upon our institutions?"¹ Garfield then set forth, at length, the same doctrine he had already expounded in the House. He defended the view that the President of the

¹ *Cong. Record*, 44 Cong., 2 sess., p. 968.

Senate had, by the words of the Constitution, the full right to open and count the votes. As to the bill itself he declared that, besides being unwarranted by the Constitution, it made Congress "a vast irresponsible returning board, with all the vices of the South." Whatever the merits of the speech, it had no effect upon the House, which voted for the Commission 191 to 86. Garfield derived such satisfaction as he could from the fact that "more than two thirds of the Republicans voted against it."

The next day, January 27, when the party caucus met to nominate members, Garfield was the first one chosen, receiving 79 out of 83 votes cast. Apparently it was the very vigor of his speech against the Commission which, together with his recognized leadership, gained him this marked compliment. The second man, Hoar, did not receive a majority—barely forty-two—until the fifth ballot. At this stage of the proceedings Garfield's friend, Judge Black, brought him news of Democratic objections to his serving on the Commission. Black said "that the objections to my appointment were that I had opposed the bill as unconstitutional and signed the Sherman report, thereby committing myself on the Louisiana question. He thought I would be embarrassed by sitting as a member of the commission. There was some force in the suggestion." (Journal, January 27.)

Garfield might well add that last sentence, for while the oath provided for in the act establishing the Commission imposed the duty of an impartial decision, nobody could have been selected who was more specifically committed on all the main points to be considered. Apparently Garfield was willing to follow Black's suggestion, "but," the journal says, "after consulting with Messrs. Hoar and McCrary and others of my friends I found that I could not withdraw without displeasing my own party in the House and I determined to let them [the Democrats] do what they would in the case. If they reject my name," he added, "I think no Republican in the House will serve on the Commission. Mr. Hoar told me emphatically that he would not." The next day, when the House voted on five names, three put forward by the Democratic caucus, two by the Republican, Garfield found that

the disaffection was not dangerous. "Twenty-three Democrats," he recorded, "dropped my name in the vote. I suppose they thought they were doing me some political injury. They probably were not aware that they were doing me a service. The fact was that an overwhelming majority of the foremost Democrats of the House voted for me, and a few Confederates and Northern extremists of no particular weight in the House voted against me. I received 240 votes, all the others 263 except Mr. Hoar who received 264."

No one can fail to notice the resemblance between Garfield's membership on the Electoral Commission and his earlier membership on the Fitz-John Porter court-martial. In each case he was thoroughly committed, on what were practically party grounds, to a particular view of the situation, and in each case he either was, or felt himself to be, compelled to serve. Furthermore, in each case it was a matter of antislavery or anti-Southern feeling that formed the undercurrent controlling his position; in 1862 his disbelief in the loyalty and true antislavery zeal of the "McClellan West Pointers"; in 1877 his firm conviction that only through violence and fraud committed upon negroes had the Southern Democrats been able, even on paper, to lay claim to the Louisiana electors. Garfield took his position not in reality to judge a case, but to strike at what he already firmly believed to be evil.

Nevertheless, he had to justify himself to sundry friends who could not stomach the inconsistency of his serving on a Commission which he had energetically declared to be unconstitutional. As usual it was to Hinsdale that he wrote (February 1) most fully in his own defense. Admitting his opinion he said, "If I thought that rendered me ineligible or made it indelicate for me to serve on the commission I should certainly decline to act; but the uniform practice of the courts is that Judges sit on the merits of the case who are of opinion that the Court has no jurisdiction."

With the Commission organized, including its fifteen members, Congress was ready to open the electoral count and on February 1 the process began. When Florida was reached, the Democrats objected to its being counted, and under the

law the case was referred to the Commission. From this time to the end Garfield played his part, describing with much detail in his journal the doings of each day. Since the proceedings were printed in full¹ and are part of general political history, it will be worth while here to quote only so much as will indicate Garfield's impressions of the experience and his judgments upon the persons involved.

On the day when the Commission met to organize, January 31, he wrote: "I learned from one of the judges that they had a long struggle to select the fifth. At two sessions last evening they failed to agree and only agreed late this morning. . . . I suspect the choice was actually made by lot, for the choice was at last unanimous." On February 2 arguments were heard by the Commission on the Florida case, where there were double returns, the first certified from the Returning Board in the usual way, the second backed up by the state government and state Supreme Court; in fact with the entire weight of the state, now captured by the Democrats, thrown in its favor. The first speaker appearing for the Democratic objectors was David Dudley Field, who, according to Garfield, had an intense eagerness to share in the proceedings. On January 31, when the Commission was drawing up rules, Garfield wrote: "David D. Field is anxious to be made a manager. He followed me to the door of the court room urging me to vote for allowing each House to appoint managers. . . . This was voted down. A blow to the hopes of David D. Field. But a place was prepared for him by Thurman's amendment to let objectors to returns speak before the commission." When Field made use of his coveted opportunity he failed to impress Garfield, who commented: "His speech was sophomoric and far below the level of the occasion. . . . J. R. Tucker followed for forty-five minutes, and made a very able argument. Each fifteen minutes of it was of more value to his side than the whole speech of his colleague." On the speeches of the defenders of the carpet-bag return Garfield commented, very much in the spirit of a judge at a contest in oratory. "Kasson spoke very clearly

¹ *Cong. Record*, part 4, 44 Cong., 2 sess., quoted as *Proceedings of Electoral Commission*.

and forcibly. There is a certain air of affectation in his manner which detracts from the impressiveness of his speech, an effort to be exquisite. But the speech was clear and able. Mr. McCrary followed in a very powerful argument . . . making his points with great clearness and force."

On Saturday, the third, the debate continued and Garfield noted with a certain connoisseurship the character of the speeches. "Merrick opened for the Democrats, making a clear and able argument. Black followed in a brilliant and striking speech but not so much to the point as Merrick's. I fear Judge Black is falling into the loose and garrulous ways of an old man." Of Matthews and Stoughton, who spoke for the Republicans, he said less, probably because he was already familiar with the Republican point of view. On Monday the arguments of counsel were completed, Evarts leading off for the Republicans. "His speech," wrote Garfield, "was very clear and scholarly and in parts able, but his sentences are too long and involved and I think he lacked his usual fervor and force." The last speaker, for the Democrats, was Charles O'Connor, leader of the New York bar. "Evidently," commented Garfield, "he was suffering from feebleness and he did not come up to my expectations, though he exhibited great clearness of mind and conciseness of statement."

It is interesting to note that Garfield, on Sunday, the fourth, actually "called on Judge Black at the Ebbitt House and had a long conversation on the great case," although Black was counsel for the Democrats. Friendship here overrode partisanship, as always when Garfield's old patron in the law was concerned. At this stage Garfield wrote to Austin (February 5) a brief note showing the tension in his mind. "I am giving all my waking hours to the Commission," he said, "and probably before this reaches you the fate of Florida will be decided. . . . Thus far members of the Commission have listened in silence and I do not know that any member has expressed his opinion to any other member. When the result is reached I will some time be able to give you the inside history of the transaction."

On February 6 the members of the Commission gave their

opinions *seriatim*. "After an impressive pause," says Garfield, "in which each member seemed disinclined to begin, Edmunds delivered his opinion of the case before us in quite a conversational tone." Garfield records the order in which they spoke and the time that each man took. He concluded: "Commission adjourned at about seven forty-five, all the Senators and Members [of the House] having spoken except Payne. The proceedings were very impressive and the debate very able. . . . On the whole, I have never spent a day in closer and severer intellectual work, with more sharp incitement from the presence of able and trained minds. I was pretty fully satisfied with my own part in the debate and I regret the whole was not taken down by a stenographer."

A resolution was later adopted allowing members to write out their remarks and Garfield's speech was, as he said, "reproduced" by him February 19. Whether or not it actually did represent what he said, the speech as it stands is a very clear, able presentation of the same constitutional theories he had already set forth and of their application to the Florida case. He laid his heaviest emphasis upon the fact that if the Commission went "behind the returns . . . [it] cannot take one step beyond the final determination which the State itself has made without going to the bottom of the poll. In brief, this Commission must assume to be the canvassing and returning board of Florida."¹ As before, he glided rather lightly over the problem which might be presented, of doubt as to the legal government within a state, but this was probably in order to avoid considering hypothetical cases. As usual, he included a plea for impartial thinking. "We must resolutely turn away," he said, "from the passionate outcries of both parties and from every consideration except the law which we have sworn to obey, and in the light of that law, determine what evidence, if any, we can consider in reaching a decision of the case."²

The next day the remaining members gave their opinions, the remaining Congressman, Payne, speaking first, with "more partisan bitterness" than any yet. "He had the bad

¹ *Proceedings of Electoral Commission*, p. 241.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 240-242.

taste to speak sneeringly of colored men in Florida." Next followed the five judges, to whom Garfield listened with especial attention, for while the opinions of the members of Congress were discounted, the positions of the judges were as yet unknown. "Judge Field then read an opinion strongly Democratic. Judge Strong then made a very clear and forcible speech on the power of Congress and of the states in reference to the appointment of electors. Judge Miller then made a very powerful speech on the authority conferred upon Congress and the Commission in reference to the Count."

Next to the last came Bradley, and the situation, as described by Garfield, shows the suppressed tension. "Judge Bradley arose at two-fifteen to read his opinion. All were intent because Bradley held the casting vote. All were making a manifest effort to appear unconcerned. It was ten minutes before it became evident that he was against the authority to hear extrinsic evidence." This foreshadowed Republican decisions, but the matter was not finally closed, for before the Florida case was settled there was a Democratic claim of ineligibility on the part of one elector, which, if granted, might have all sorts of disturbing consequences in other states, notably in Oregon. On this point, says Garfield, Bradley "surprised us all by holding that we could hear testimony as to the eligibility of Humphreys. Clifford followed in a dull speech but strongly Democratic. . . . At three the vote was taken, eight to seven a strictly partisan division. Doors opened and adjourned. Great excitement throughout the capitol."

On the eighth the Commission heard counsel on the eligibility case and Garfield again set down his judgments. "The lawyers in general practice do not speak as well on these questions as members of Congress whose minds have been full of this subject for the last two months and who are more familiar with the questions involved in the controversy."

On the ninth the Commission decided the eligibility case, with everything hanging on Bradley's decision, since it was recognized now that every man except Bradley was practically certain to vote on straight party lines. So clear was

this that, according to Garfield, "Judge Miller soon proposed that Judge Bradley state his position on the question which would probably be decisive." This blunt forcing of the issue was naturally unwelcome to Bradley, who "preferred to hear further discussion, and so the debate went on." When it came Bradley's turn he held against the Democratic contention. When it came time to vote, Payne, says Garfield, "made a complimentary address and an adroit appeal to Bradley to reconsider [his] opinion. He spoke of him as the umpire of the nation and a man of conscientious purity. Miller rebuked the assumption that Bradley was any more conscientious than any other member of the Commission and was sure Bradley did not so assume nor was it true that the other fourteen had made up their minds upon any thing except that now before them. Payne made a not very successful attempt to retract what he had said." At the end, when the Commission had two conflicting motions before it, Garfield "offered a resolution covering the whole Florida case, which was adopted eight to seven."

The Commission's finding was submitted to the Houses on Saturday, the tenth. The country now realized that the body was composed of eight Republicans and seven Democrats, that in all human probability every vote would be partisan, and, unless some unforeseen aspect should be developed in some state yet to be counted, the election of Hayes was a foregone conclusion. The result was a roar of Democratic anger that shook the capital and reverberated through the country. Speculation was active over possible steps to be taken by the Democratic majority in the House. Garfield's journal shows that the Republicans were discussing the subject all Sunday and that by night the rumor was current that the Democrats favored "a revolutionary resistance to the completion of the count." On Monday, however, when a resolution to recommit the report to the Commission was brought up in the House, Randall, the Speaker, ruled it out of order, and the count was resumed in the regular manner.

Garfield wrote on this day (February 12) an interesting letter to Hinsdale: "I have never heard an abler debate than that which occurred in the Commission on the questions sub-

mitted to it in reference to Florida. I may say to you that I have never felt more satisfied in any intellectual work than in the part I have borne in the deliberations of the Commission. Of course the result is not yet altogether settled, for questions may arise on some one of the other states. The Democrats are furious over the finding of the Commission in the Florida case, and are threatening to resist the completion of the count. I hardly think, however, that they will do it."

On the afternoon of February 13 the Louisiana returns were reached, were objected to by the Democrats, and sent to the Commission. The situation here was less favorable to the Democrats than that in Florida, for the rival returns did not have any apparent legal backing, being certified only by McEnery, the Democratic claimant for the governorship in 1873, who had been prevented by federal troops and the action of the federal District Court from actually securing the office and had never been recognized by the federal government. Nevertheless, the action of the Returning Board had been so extreme that the Democrats had not wholly abandoned hope of finding some way to overthrow it. Here, of course, Garfield was most deeply involved, and his journal shows the intensity of his interest.

The issue confronted now by the Commission was as to whether they would admit evidence to prove the wrongfulness of the action of the Returning Board. Trumbull, Democratic counsel, "made an offer of testimony which it took an hour to read," and then, after some dispute as to the amount of time to be allowed for debate, the Commission listened to arguments on the admissibility of evidence to show fraud. This was the crucial point in the whole contest. Some of the same counsel spoke who had already appeared and sundry new ones were added. On the December side, Matt H. Carpenter, a new speaker, impressed Garfield strongly. He "opened the argument for the Tilden electors and spoke with great force for two hours. I was impressed," reflected Garfield in the journal, "with the belief that Carpenter was a man who had been so accustomed to speak on any side to which his interest inclined him that he had lost his convic-

tions and therefore he uses whatever arguments will suit his case for the moment. This is a great calamity to happen to any man's intellect." Garfield saw flaws as well as strength in another Democratic lawyer. "Judge Campbell," he writes on the fifteenth, "spoke for two hours and after making a strong speech in the beginning, later became involved in the passages of the Louisiana controversy to such an extent as to mar the strength of his presentation of the case. I doubt if any Louisiana man is competent to discuss this question wisely."

On the Republican side Garfield admired Shellabarger and Evarts. Of Shellabarger's argument on the fourteenth he said, "I am inclined to think it the ablest that has been made on either side," but when he came to Evarts's three-hour speech of the fifteenth he became unreservedly enthusiastic. "It was a very masterly speech. During its delivery I wrote this note to Mr. Hoar. 'Many years ago I was angry at Mr. Carlyle for saying that Sir Walter Scott was a healthy man. Later reflection has led me to believe that sanity is greater than greatness. It seems to me that the greatest quality of Mr. Evarts's mind is sanity. He is discussing this question in a thoroughly sane manner and is all the while in possession of himself.' The speech was most admirable."

On the sixteenth the Commission met to discuss and to vote and everyone knew that upon Justice Bradley's decision hung the outcome of the election. There was just enough difference between the Florida case and the Louisiana case to permit the shadow of a chance to remain for a different action on his part.

Garfield's own opinion on the Louisiana case probably included the material he had prepared upon the subject in case it had come to a debate in the House, for although he began by saying that the rule adopted by the Commission in the Florida case would be decisive in the Louisiana case, he did not content himself with a mere repetition but considered at length the points raised by Thurman against the legality of the action of the Louisiana Returning Board. It may be doubted whether Garfield ever surpassed this "opin-

ion" as a political and constitutional argument. At every point he met Thurman's contentions with utterances of the United States Supreme Court upon analogous situations and with precedents from earlier electoral counts. Again, with skill and candor, he summarized his position. "I am no champion of State sovereignty, as that doctrine has sometimes been taught in our political history. But there are rights so clearly and so exclusively conferred upon the States, that to invade them is to break up the solid foundation of our institutions; and if one act can be more sovereign than another it may fairly be said that the most sovereign act which a state of this Union can perform is the act of choosing the men who shall cast its vote for President and Vice President." His conclusion was, "The State of Louisiana had empowered the returning board to determine and declare who had been appointed electors, and having provided no appeal from its decision, its action became the final and conclusive determination of the State; and neither Congress nor this Commission has any authority to inquire whether there was fraud or error in the process by which the determination was reached." Incidentally he remarked that "after a careful study of the history of that election, and considering the turbulence and irregularities that have long prevailed in that State, I am of the opinion that, on the whole, the decree of the returning board was in accordance with substantial justice."¹

Garfield's journal of this day is brief but tense. "Went to the Commission at ten o'clock and remained until near nine in the evening. A session of eleven hours. A day of the most nervous strain and anxiety I have ever passed since Chickamauga. The order of speaking was Morton, Thurman, Garfield, Bayard, Edmunds, Hunton, Hoar, Bradley. We had no hint of the conclusion to be reached until Bradley was twenty minutes into his speech. The suspense was painful and the efforts of members to appear unconcerned gave strong proof of the intensity of the feeling. I could hear or fancied I could hear the watches of the members ticking in their pockets. When Bradley reached a proposition

¹ *Proceedings of Electoral Commission*, p. 242.

that made his result evident, there was a long breath of relief, up or down, but actual relief to all from the long suspense."

The majority of the Commission thus adopted the same line of argument already used by Garfield in his speech of January 16, and, refusing to admit any evidence as to fraud, rested on the legality of the action of the Returning Board as the body authorized to ascertain and announce the will of the state. Politically also the situation was clear, so clear that further action by the Commission was scarcely more than a form. The sequence of votes, 8 to 7, which recorded the decisions, showed that the supposedly impartial fifteenth man had adopted the full Republican arguments and could be counted on regularly for a Republican vote. The election of Hayes was now certain, unless the Democratic majority in the House should take some violent or revolutionary action, such as refusing to complete the count. That evening Garfield wrote to Austin: "You can scarcely imagine the intensity of feeling among the Democrats over the findings of the Commission. I may say to you (but not to be made public) that my friends have been anxious for my personal safety for many days. They say that if Mr. Hoar or I were killed or disabled, the House would immediately fill the place with a Democrat and thus turn the election to Tilden. When we came out of the Commission at 9 this evening, our friends were at the door with a carriage and came home with us. I don't feel any serious apprehension."

The fact that the outcome now was certain appeared in other ways. The next day Sherman sent for Garfield and opened a discussion on the proper constitution of Hayes's cabinet (February 7), hoping to fill the Treasury position, and a little later "several people called, among them General Logan who asked me to assist him in being made Secretary of War. Also Judge Cartter who wishes to go to the Supreme Court." (February 25.) At the first sign of victory the office-seeker put in his appearance.

But there was still the Democratic majority of the House to reckon with and the most exhausting and difficult part of the contest lay ahead. As early as February 13 Garfield

noted a tendency on the part of Democrats, not only in the House but in the Commission itself, to delay action. "They vote for the longest time and the longest recesses and the most frequent adjournments." Beginning Monday, the nineteenth, when Congress resumed the count after the Louisiana decision, a new policy became clearly visible, for Democrats, led by Springer of Illinois, began to raise objections to the eligibility of electors in state after state, forcing a separation of the Houses and a debate. The intention was to use the power of objection for the sole purpose of delay. It was, in fact, a new kind of filibuster. Since only a group of the Democrats in the House followed this plan, each objection ended with the two Houses overruling it, and so the count proceeded until, on February 21, Oregon was reached. Here the Democrats in the House voted together to support the objection and the result was a difference of opinion between the Houses and the reference of the case to the Electoral Commission.

The Oregon case presented technical difficulties which seemed, at first glance, to involve the eight Republicans on the Commission in a dilemma. The governor's certificate, which they had insisted on accepting in the cases of Florida and Louisiana, was given in this case to a Democratic elector, instead of to a Republican candidate who had a larger vote but was a postmaster at the time he was voted for. He had resigned afterward, and his two Republican colleagues had reappointed him to fill the vacancy, but this action the governor had refused to recognize and when the two Republicans refused to vote with the one Democrat, but insisted on voting with the late ineligible, now reappointed to fill a vacancy, he had treated their places as vacant and appointed two Republicans who acted as electors, voting with Cronin, the one Democrat. There were thus two returns, the three Republican votes being certified to by the secretary of state; the two Republicans and one Democrat having the governor's certificate. If the Republicans were consistent in refusing "to go behind the returns," how could they avoid accepting the latter?

The matter was argued with great elaborateness before

the Commission, occupying all of two days. Garfield commented on one speech, that of Judge Hoadly for the Democrats. "It was a very able effort to sustain a perfectly absurd proposition. I doubt if Cronin will receive a vote in the Commission." (February 21.) After the counsel had finished, the members of the Commission began and spoke in turn for four hours that day, the twenty-second, and all the forenoon of the twenty-third. But after Judge Bradley at half past two had delivered an opinion in favor of the Hayes electors, Garfield adds, "This closed the debate as no one else wished to speak."

When the decision was reported to the House an effort was made by the filibustering Democrats to adjourn to Monday, the twenty-sixth, but it was beaten, owing to the fact that a large number of Southern Democrats were declining to follow the lead of their angry Northern fellows. "This was a saving vote," commented Garfield. But it was well into the afternoon before the Oregon vote was finally counted, and when Pennsylvania was taken up another objection to the eligibility of an elector brought on a struggle which prevented further progress that day. With only six more working days of the session and with the appropriation bills blocked by the filibustering, things became severely congested. Garfield wrote to Hinsdale (February 25): "We are in imminent danger of reaching the 4th of March without a President. It is absolutely in the power of the Democrats of the House to accomplish this under the bill. If we are saved it will be by the Southern rebels refusing to follow Northern democrats." It is to be noted that Garfield had for some time been giving open aid to Holman and to Wood in trying to push ahead with the appropriation bills in the brief opportunities open to them.

After Monday, February 26, had been devoted to counting the vote of two states only and after South Carolina, upon being reached, had been sent to the Commission, with the prospect of a prolonged hearing upon it; and with six more states to be counted in the few remaining working days of the session, sundry Ohio Republicans, friends of Hayes, felt the time had come to secure the support of Southern

Democrats in completing the count, even if it called for distinct political pledges. The result was what became known as the "Wormley conference." To this Garfield was invited and found himself involved in a project to which he refused any assistance.

"At nine oclock," he wrote (February 26), "I went to Wormley's at the invitation of Stanley Mathews. I found Mathews in his room, Foster, John Sherman, Dennison, Ellis, Watterson and Burke of New Orleans. Mathews spoke as though it was certain that the Nichols [Democratic] government would be sustained. At least United States troops would not be used. Burke drew me aside and read from a paper some propositions, among them that civil and political rights should be guaranteed to the negroes, that there should be no political prosecution, that the Nichols legislature should elect at least one Republican senator, etc. This and Mathews' talk led me to believe that there had been former consultations and that a compact of some kind was meditated. I spoke a few moments stating that nobody had any authority to speak for Governor Hayes beyond his party platform and letter of acceptance, and it would be neither honorable nor wise to do so, if any one had such authority; that those Southern Democrats who are resisting filibustering are doing so on the ground of high public duty and honor; and any bargain would make their motives far lower. For myself I had no doubt that the new administration would deal justly and generously with the South, and the whole nation would honor those Southern men who are resisting anarchy and thus are preventing civil war; but neither they nor we could afford to do anything that would be or appear to be a political bargain. I thought Mathews did not like my remarks, but I made them so as to prevent any misunderstanding so far as I was concerned and left at eleven not caring to be present longer." Garfield was careful to avoid the appearance of any deal, but there can be no doubt that the Southerners present considered that they had "assurances" from Hayes which would be satisfactory to them and which he would be bound to respect. At all events they declined to follow the filibusters.

The arguments before the Commission on the South Carolina vote were no more than a form, since the decision was known in advance, but Democratic counsel went through their full duty, including such veterans as Montgomery Blair, Attorney-General under Lincoln, and Judge Black, who, according to Garfield, "closed the argument by a bitter and insulting speech of three quarters of an hour on general politics." When the Commission began its consultation Garfield wrote: "The Democrats were manifestly determined to prevent a report before the two Houses should adjourn for the day. Hunton made a speech of an hour, Bayard of nearly an hour, Abbott three quarters of an hour, Kernan (who had replaced Thurman) half an hour. With the exception of brief interlocutory remarks the Republicans said nothing until the close when Morton spoke for fifteen minutes." Then the vote was taken and as usual the Hayes electors were ratified by the Commission, eight to seven, but the loquaciousness of the Democratic members had won its point, for the case was not reported to Congress until the next day."

On February 28 and March 1 the final battle was fought, and in two days of exhausting filibustering and confusion, lasting until four o'clock on the morning of March 2, the count was finally completed over the bitter and boisterous opposition of the Democrats. "At times," wrote Garfield in his journal, "there was more violence and disorder than I have ever seen in the House. Beebe of New York sprang up on his desk and screamed with all his might." When the last state, Wisconsin, was reached and filibustering was resumed, Garfield says: "I took more part in managing our side and at a few minutes after four o'clock in the morning a final vote was reached. At fifteen minutes after four the Senate having come to the House the count was completed and Hayes was announced elected as President."

The main danger was thus thrust aside, but Garfield, although utterly exhausted, turned immediately to the task of helping the Democratic chairmen of committees force through the appropriation bills in the two remaining legislative days. It was a desperately difficult task, but Garfield

stuck to his work both days until two hours or more after midnight and played the game out to the hour of noon, March 4, when the Congress expired. At one time on the third, when the Democrats in the House brought up a resolution declaring Tilden lawfully elected, Garfield threatened filibustering, but he says "we finally let them have their way. I am not sure but that I made a mistake in so doing. They may make the resolution the basis of some revolutionary proceeding."

On the last day, at the very end, the Democratic majority took a step in connection with the Army Appropriation Bill which proved prophetic. "The Democrats," wrote Garfield, "insisted on a clause forbidding the use of the army in the State of Louisiana or Florida. This I resisted, and they refused to allow the bill to pass. This will probably compel an extra session. Our last act was to demand the Ayes and Noes." The speech in which Garfield, as he said, resisted was, however, a perfectly good-tempered one, remarkably so under the circumstances and coming from a man who had been in the thick of the fight. "Let me say another thing in all frankness to gentlemen on the other side of the House . . . now when we are closing the life of this Congress, when we see evidences of a better understanding, of renewed efforts to bury the bitterness of the past, is it wise for you to insist upon a measure which, if adopted, will greatly increase the distrust which many of our people have felt toward you? . . . I ask gentlemen who represent the Southern states whether they think that is a wise and prudent and magnanimous course, even if it were constitutional?"¹

The end of the exhausting and exciting session left Garfield one of the most conspicuous men in the country. His journey as one of the "visiting statesmen," his speeches against the Electoral Commission and the power of Congress to "go behind the returns," and his subsequent membership on that Commission with its "eight to seven" votes made him prominent as a rigid Republican. At the same time his agreement with Hayes's "new Southern policy" showed that he was a moderate who was willing to face facts. But before he

¹ *Cong. Record*, 44 Cong., 2 sess., p. 2248.

left for his Ohio farm, he was called upon to make a crucial decision regarding his own political future, a decision like so many he had had to face before, involving his willingness to take what lay ready to his hand, almost for the asking, namely, the senatorship for Ohio. The matter first appeared February 17, the day after the eight to seven decision of the Electoral Commission to count Louisiana for Hayes. "Called at John Sherman's by appointment and had a long conversation in reference to the proper construction of the Cabinet for Hayes. I think Sherman wants to go into the Treasury and have me succeed him in the Senate. Just now the roads fork for me. The one straight ahead is to stay in the House, to stand the chance for the speakership, and another is the Senate. I shall probably pursue my usual course of seeking nothing and letting events take care of themselves. I don't believe there is any real chance for me, or any Republican to secure the speakership, though many think there is."

Nobody had done more to make Hayes president during the long harassing struggle, nobody had come closer to him or assumed to speak with more firmness of his intentions and his principles. And now as reward and recognition of his services, he was to be asked for one more sacrifice of personal ambition. On the day of the inauguration, Monday, March 5, his journal records: "At ten o'clock called on Governor Hayes at Senator Sherman's and had a brief conversation with him. He wants me to remain in the House and let Stanley Mathews go to the Senate. He thinks he can aid me in organizing the House for the coming Congress. I promised to consider the matter and talk with him again. Rode with him in Senator Sherman's carriage . . . to the Capitol." Once more the senatorship seemed to be in his grasp. Sherman was to go into the cabinet as Secretary of the Treasury, and his unexpired term was to be filled. The Ohio legislature was in session and was controlled by Republicans. Garfield's friends, alert to the situation, were eager and ready to make the necessary campaign. Already their letters and telegrams were pouring in on him.

His mind went through a series of phases. On March 6 he wrote in his diary: "I ought to have mentioned in yesterday's

journal that I was a little bit nettled, but perhaps without reason at the President's wish to have Mathews elected to the Senate. I have no doubt, however, that he sincerely wishes me to help him in his policy of pacification and perhaps I ought to do so." On the ninth: "Received a telegram from McLain that at an informal meeting of the Republican members of the Legislature, I had twenty-two votes and Mathews thirteen. Governor Taft called and expressed his desire to run for the Senate but did not oppose me." To this he replied by telegraphing to McLain: "Have delayed conclusion on account of complications here. Will decide soon. When is caucus. Give me your estimation of chances." But he wrote in his journal, March 10: "I recognize in myself an infirmity of will in choosing what to do in reference to the Senatorship. It is a choice not of evils but of goods, with many contingencies attached to both. On the whole I am attracted by the suggestion to do the unusual thing of declining the Senatorship, and staying in the House."

On that same day (March 10) he wrote to Hinsdale on the senatorial situation: "It is due to Hayes that we stand by him and give his policy a fair trial. I understand he wants me to stay in the House. I shall see him this evening, and if he is decided in his wishes on that point, I shall probably decline to be a candidate for the Senate. On many accounts I would like to take that place, but it seems to fall to my lot to make the sacrifice. It is probable though not certain that I can be elected if I run."

The President's wish decided him. "March 10 I took the ladies to the executive mansion and made a long call on Mrs. Hayes and the President. When the visitors thinned out I had a full and free talk with the President on the Senatorship. He is very anxious to have me stay in the House, and I agreed to do so. He wrote me a letter which I am at liberty to publish, asking me to stay." The next day he telegraphed to McLain: "The president requests me to remain in the House where he thinks I can, at present, be more useful in the work of pacification of the country which his administration has undertaken. Therefore I will not be a candidate for the Senate. Give my thanks to those who have desired to

support me." So Garfield again let promotion pass him by out of sheer loyalty to the President. He wrote to Austin (March 21): "I wish you would write me how our friends feel about my declining the senatorship. I know that I may have missed the only opportunity of my life to go to the Senate; but when Hayes made the request I could not refuse without selfishness. But I cannot believe that, in the long run, a man will lose by self-sacrifice."

He was under no illusions as to the way such an act might look to the ordinary man. "The newspapers," he wrote in his diary, "treat my declination of the Senatorship very kindly, many speaking with regret that I did not run for the Senate, and others appreciating the generosity of withdrawing for service in the House. On the whole I am not certain what the general verdict will be. I have some doubt whether the public will appreciate my motive. They will be quite as likely to charge it to timidity about making the canvass as to any other motive." What was also rather disheartening was the wholly casual way in which Hayes treated the affair. Four days after he had formally asked Garfield to withdraw and after the latter had done so, he changed his mind. "At four o'clock the President and his son called to see me," Garfield records (March 14), "and spent half to three quarters of an hour. . . . He expressed great interest in the Senatorship from Ohio, saying that he did not want an inexperienced person like Howland nor a hostile one like Taft and did not know but I had better be a candidate. I told him it was too late. I could not consent."

Garfield remained in Washington only long enough to see Hayes's cabinet installed and to exchange comments with political acquaintances. On March 16 he left for Ohio, terminating a period in his life more crowded with tense and exhausting labors and calling for more formidable decisions than any other. He had played to the fullest extent the part he had assumed in the previous June, as supporter, advocate, and loyal follower of Hayes, stepping rapidly from a position of moderate prominence to one of the most conspicuous places in the Republican party. He had become, in short, what he had never been before, except on the stump, an

acknowledged party leader. And when at the end he failed to secure the senatorship he desired, it was because, in deference to a party and personal loyalty, he had declined to take what lay apparently in his grasp. The transformation from the legislator to the party spokesman was complete.

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